■ SUPER/E2
Super's 3rd anniversary season starts: From army of 'me' to army of 'we'

■ ACROSS/A13
Benguet judge rules cops can't justify warrantless arrests of 11 youths

■ PROPERTY/B2-1
Retirement villages for foreigners to earn $40B, generate 4M jobs

■ SAT. SPECIAL/A2-1
'Isn't It Romantic?': Sharon's new slick CD fabulous with her emotive power, sincerity

RP cop hurt in E. Timor; 200 Pinoys alerted for evacuation

By Nikko Dizon

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY ALERTED THE military on the possibility of evacuating about 200 Filipinos from East Timor after four days of violence in the world's youngest nation left 20 people dead and many wounded, including a Filipino police officer.

Chief Inspector Edgar Layan, 46, of Sta. Mesa, Manila, was shot in the stomach on Thursday.

SEE COOP-A4

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, May 27, 2006 ★★ 18 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 168 P18 website: www.inq7.net

US Senate OKs bill to allow foreign workers legal status

WASHINGTON—THE US SENATE ADOPTED ON Thursday (Friday in Manila) sweeping reforms of an immigration law that will allow millions of undocumented workers to seek legal status in the United States.

Most controversial is a provision that would allow many of the estimated 11.5 million foreign workers here illegally, many of them Mexican, to gain legal status.

US SENATE-A4

'Like cutting deal with Hitler's men'

"IT IS INSPIRING TO INSPIRE," Roni Garduce says on arrival. Bewildered by his instant celebrity, he shyly responds to his rousing welcome at the Naia. Next stop for the adventurer: The South Pole.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

GMA RP'S BEST SALESWOMAN IS NO POLLYANNA. President Arroyo declares she is a "proud and ardent saleswoman" for the country and is bullish about its prospects but at the same time is a realist about national problems during the 41th Association Caribbean Internationale (ACI), a world congress of financial analysts held at the PICC. (Story on Page A7) STR/A6, A26

Salonga hits PCGG's compromise with Marcoses

By Norman Bordadora

THE MAN WHO launched the global search for Ferdinand Marcos' hidden wealth has urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to pull out of settlement talks with the Marcoses, and said striking a compromise with them would be like the Holocaust victims cutting a deal with Hitler's Nazis.

"The victims of the Holocaust hounded the Nazi war criminals wherever they went. The criminals were pursued until ... the last one of them was sentenced," former Senate President Jovito Salonga said in an interview yesterday.

"The Holocaust victims hounded of the war criminals to the very end. That took more than 50 years. We're just into our 20th year."

Salonga was the first chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government formed in 1986 by then President Corazon Aquino to track down assets

LIKE CUTTING-A4

Why Enron bosses were convicted

HOUSTON—KENNETH LAY MAY have joined his wayward pilots when he testified in his own defense, snarling at a prosecutor and telling a jury of middle-class men and women that he couldn't turn off his lofty lifestyle "like a spigot," despite $100 million in personal debt.

Jeffrey Skilling may have guaranteed himself a string of convictions when he couldn't counter incriminating testimony from prosecution witnesses with more than, "It's not true."

In one of the greatest corporate scandals in US history, former Enron Corp. chiefs Lay and Skilling were convicted on Thursday of fraud and conspiracy and could spend the rest of their lives in prison.

The Lay and Skilling convictions bring to 19 the number of Enron executives who pleaded guilty or have been found guilty of crimes.

The verdict capped a bitter four-month trial that was the culmination of the government's years-long effort to punish those for their roles in the stunning 2001 collapse of Enron, which shook the country's faith in corporate America and led to new corporate governance regulations.

"The jury sent an unmistakable message: You can't lie to shareholders. No matter how rich and powerful, you must play by the rules," prosecutor Sean Berkowitz said.

WHY ENRON-A6

Third on Everest but first in Manila

By Alexis Papa and Nikko Dizon

HE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE first to reach the summit of Mt. Everest, but Roni Garduce still came home a winner.

The nation's most accomplished mountaineer arrived home yesterday to a warm welcome from his countrymen and from officials of GMA 7, the television network that supported his climb.

Garduce reached the summit of Mt. Everest last May 19, two days after Lee Dauriez and Ernesto "Pastor" Ermita, two other Filipino climbers from the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE), achieved the feat.

GMA 7 news director Jessica Soho said the network was impressed with Garduce's humility and decision not to race the climbers to a win.

"He has always been humble despite his amazing, fantastic credentials. His demeanor did not change during the expedition, even with the talk that this was turning out to be a race. We admire and respect his decision that he did not want to race," Soho said.

THIRD-A2

Erap gets credit for bigger carabaos

By Norman Bordadora

WHO'S GOT THE LAST laugh now?

They laughed at then Sen. Joseph Estrada, to exclude even some of his colleagues in the Senate, for what was perceived as his overambitious over-the-counter sale of bonds to be authorized in the Senate that had to do with the carabao.

The sense was that Estrada was making much ado

ERAP-A4

SENATE PROBE

Pro-Erap 5 blame GMA for abduction

By TJ Burgonio and Luige A. del Puerto

"IS THERE NO SAFETY FOR ORdinary citizens like us? Is there no security? What kind of government is this?"

These were the questions raised by Virgilio Esmeralda, chair of the Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice, after he and four other members of the group linked to former President Joseph Estrada were freed Thursday night from their detention by the military.

Looking grim and unsmiling enumerated, four of the men showed up yesterday at a press briefing at the Senate and said they were holding President Macapagal-Arroyo liable for their abduction and detention by military intelligence agents.

They attended the Senate plenary debate on the budget of the Department of National Defense and witnessed senators grill Armed Forces officials on the incident through Sen. Manuel Villar Jr.

The five men were picked up Monday from a house in Quezon City, held incommunicado without warrants and released on "insufficient evidence" Thursday night.

"Since 5th Arroyo has made no bones about being the Commander in Chief, she should be liable for this," Esmeralda said at the briefing.

"It seems like a coincidence that the head of the Isafp (Intelligence Service of the AFP) is a relative of Gloria Arroyo's," he added in hindsight, referring to Commodore Leonardo Calderon. "I'm not surprised this has happened to us."

On the floor, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada demanded that AFP public information chief Col. Tristan Kison apologize for misleading the public on the whereabouts of Esmeralda, Ruben Ekinisio, Jim Louie Cabasaan, Dennis Boana and PO3 Jose Jonathan Camenog.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga stood by Kison, saying it was his "judgment call" whether to apologize. But Cruz said he had ordered the Isafp Inspector General to submit a report.

PRO-ERAP-A5

ENDANGERED PEUR. Boy from Thailand's ethnic tribe Karen'dins beside a fish caught from the Salween river near the Thai-Burma border, which runs through a remote, stunningly beautiful and ecologically unadmarked area inhabited by minority groups now in danger of incursions from their neighbors' economic planners. AP

Gov't bars Satur from leaving for Indonesia

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE CABINET OVERSIGHT COMmittee on internal security (Covid) has barred Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo from leaving for Jakarta to speak before a global antidebt-ega debt conference.

The militant party-list lawmaker had been scheduled to fly to the Indonesian capital at 8:30 a.m. yesterday on Singapore Airlines, but was informed by Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez that he might be prevented from leaving the airport.

"I made it very clear to them that I will return after three days, so what are they so afraid of?" Ocampo told the Inquirer.

Ocampo, along with the rest of the "Batman 5," as well as another military party-list lawmaker, Antiporno Rep. Crispin Beltran, is fighting charges of rebellion filed before a Makati regional trial court.

They are accused of involvement in the alleged Left-Right plot to grab

GOV'T-A4

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Luisita hits gov't for deception

Special CARP team for Negros

To avoid violence between farmers, landowners

By Blanche S. Rivera

AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES YESTERDAY urged the government to form a special team to implement the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in Negros Occidental after a group of landowners warned there would be violence if the farm workers are forcibly installed in their lands.

POLICE officers push back protesters who tried to get closer to the US Embassy in Manila for a "lightning protest" Friday May 26, against the recent expansion of security agreement between the Philippines and the United States. The protesters also demanded the scrapping of the Visiting Forces Agreement, VFA, which allows US troops back to Philippine soil for large-scale joint military exercises.

New RP-US security pact needs no ratification – DND chief

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SMART

Pro-Erap 5 blame GMA for abduction

From page A1

The P45-billion 2006 budget, which had been tied up by the senators' grilling of military officials on the incidents since Thursday night, was deemed submitted yesterday on the condition that the military brass submit to report on Monday.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the committee on national defense, set an inquiry into the incident for Tuesday.

Names unknown

Dumiquin, Cabanatuan, Bosso and Carmona turned up for the 11 a.m. hearing at the Senate conference room, accompanied by Senators Estrada and Zeppo Debuche (R).

Dionisio, 60, who had earlier said he was tortured and doused upon his muscle on his body was in a Metro Manila hospital, his sister Elvira Lirio told the inquiry.

"Our primary concern now is his health," Lirio said.

"We have consulted our lawyers; they're preparing charges," said Cabe CC's son-child Lirio, in whose presence Cruz house the surrenders arrests were made.

He added: "As to who will be charged, that's the problem. We don't know their names; we can't recall their faces. Things happened so fast."

"But I think it will be easy to get this information because it has been reported in the papers that we were in holy custody."

Senator Estrada later said on the floor that the case would test the criminal and administrative charges against Calderon "for authorizing the operation," the arresting agents, and Biazon "for trying to cover it up."

During the Thursday night debate on the DND budget, AFP officials admitted that members of the Intelligence Service Group (ISG) carried out the operation.

The AFP officials divulged the identities of the agents in the arrests during executive (closed-door) session, while the press briefing was ongoing.

Later in the plenary debates on the DND budget at past 3 p.m., Estrada again stated the issue by inserting an Enrile's denial that the five were in holy custody and admission of Dionisio's arrest.

"We must apologize to the Filipino people, whom he resided," the senator said. "If we have a public information officer who is misleading the public, I don't think he has any place in the [AFP]."

Hearing the punches

At a joint conference held at Estrada's house shortly after all five were seen freed on Thursday night, details of alleged physical and mental torture were told.

Dumiquin, Bosso, Cabanatuan and Carmona confirmed that Dionisio, the oldest among them and the one tagged as a ranking official of the Communist Party of the Philippines in Metro Manila, got the worst of the beatings.

Even as the press conference, Dionisio was absent. He had trouble walking, Dumiquin said.

Bosso said that on the night of their arrest, he could hear the punches landing on Dionisio's body and the latter's pleas for respite.

"I was closest to Ruben [in the place where we were taken]. We can, the questions asked of him, the punches and beating—they made up the worst kind of torture. And I also could hear it; but I was more of a victim than to see ... because there was nothing I could do about it," Bosso said.

"It went on for about eight. They didn't allow you to go to sleep. If you did, they hit you. You have to bear the cries of your friend," he said.

Cold place, hot place

Dumiquin said he and his friends were disoriented and could see tall eagles from day because they were blindfolded.

Each could not tell what had happened to the others, he said. They did not know who took them, and they were being made to admit they were part of a communist hit squad in the capital.

Bosso also Dumiquin announced to be one day his children were moved him three times.

"They brought us to a cold place and a hot place. We were brought to a windy place, to a green land. This was the second torture. We could smell gasoline. We could touch cold hands. We could see underneath what was happening," he said, adding:

"The first time I saw the light of day [since Monday] was when we were brought in the DILG [Department of Justice]."

Dumiquin recalled that when they had a chance to talk, Dionisio told him the beating stopped only when he lost to would admit to being a CPP official.

"They gave him good food to eat, but when they asked him the composition of the CCP1 in Metro Rizal and naturally he could not answer, the beating started again," Dumiquin said.

'Like a dog'

Jun Cabanatuan said he not blindfolded "like a dog" throughout his detention.

He said he was made to hear all sorts of noises, including the sound of something being chopped to pieces.

Cabanatuan, whose brother is a retired military official, said he could not see well during his arrest because his hands were tied.

"You were blindfolded and could not see the food," he said. "I asked them to loosen the binding on my hands, and they did a little. I had to keep my face very close to the plates."

They kept him moving, he said.

Once, he was brought to what seemed like barracks, where he heard someone coming, presumably a blade, and fastening or something.

"It came to a point that I said, 'Sir, please have pity. Don't hurt me here. I don't want to die,'" he recalled. "I could mind the physical torture, but the mental torture hurt too much."

Victim of circumstances

Among the five men, it was most difficult for Carmona, a member of the Quezon City Police, to accept what had happened.

He described himself as a victim of circumstances—a pretext to the friend of Dionisio's who had dropped in that fateful Monday afternoon to chat.

Carmona said that when the military agents stormed the house, he introduced himself as a cop and asked what they were.

"They told me to hit the ground, and when I insisted on asking for their identities, someone stepped on my face and head," he said, adding:

"What I could not accept is that a cop (like me) had to experience something as harrowing as that. If that could happen to me, how much more to those who aren't defend themselves?"

But although the experience left him terrified, Carmona said, his faith in the police and the military had not wavered.

"There may be just a few of them doing those bad things [I believe] the military and police are still ready to serve the people," he said.

Carmona wondered how security forces could have accused him of being a communist when his identities were a military surgeon.

"I fight criminals, not be fights subversives and rebels," Carmona said.

Erap gets credit for bigger carabaos

From page A1

over nothing. He was not making sense and they laughed behind his back.

The Philippine Carabao Act, or Republic Act No. 7307, was enacted into law in March 1992, just a few months before Estrada ran as Ramos-Estrada's running mate and were re-elected.

Estrada yesterday made sure he got credit for the law that has resulted in the success of the country's carabao program.

PDI failed to mention Erap

"I was the one who authored the bill," Estrada told the historian of the law that created the Philippine Carabao Center after reading the Inquirer's Thursday issue that carabaos bred at the center are heavier and sturdier than native carabaos and females produce 10 times more milk.

The breakthrough on the great strides made at the Philippine Carabao Center is history City Mailer, Nueva Ecija, pleased Estrada except that it failed to mention that he authored the Carabao Act.

Estrada expressed pride over the accomplishment made by the PCC, created by the Philippine Carabao Act of 1992. Estrada sponsored the bill in the Senate while then Ramos Rep. Wilfrito Enrile sponsored it in the House of Representatives.

'White Revolution'

"I was helped by Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani. She was the committee. Now, we again have a project called White Revolution to enhance the program's objective of having increased milk production by carabaos," Estrada added.

Estrada said that before the carabao enhancement law was passed, Filipino farmers across the country had to content themselves with a liter or less of milk from their carabaos.

When the semi-breeding program of the center commenced and started producing their own carabaos, the female species were already producing at least twice as much milk. The carabao beef also improved as the buffaloes were meatier and heavier.

The economic value of the farmers doubled," Estrada said.

Agri-educational

Estrada also made sure that the dispersal of the center's crossbred carabaos would be administered by agricultural education institutions, not the Department of Agriculture.

"If it was the DA that would handle the dispersal, those more influential could monopolize the carabaos delivered to their areas. I saw to it that that won't happen," Estrada said.

Carabao named Glory

Six years after the law was enacted, the PCC's new name has become its outdoor superstar. Glory was named in the birth of "Glory" a 44-kilo water buffalo that can produce as much as 34 liters of milk a day.

Glory was formally named after President Macapagal-Arroyo who succeeded Estrada following the joint's center ceased in January 2001.

Out of the 6 carabaos born in January, two named Erap after Estrada. There were also calves named Fidel and Gory after former Presidents Fidel Ramos and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

'Carabao English'

Estrada said he was elated by Sen. John Henry Estrada who was pushing for the carabao bill in the Senate.

"Senator Estrada said Erap was being aggressive in pushing for the carabao bill because of one thing. We know what that is? It's because he speaks carabao English," Estrada said, managing to laugh at his expression of speaking less than good English.

US Senate OKs bill to allow foreign . . .

From page A1

The bill passed 62-36 despite deep divisions within the majority Republican Party and among Americans.

The Senate bill has the bipartisan support of Republican Sen. John McCain and Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy as well as the backing of Republican President George W. Bush.

Senators snapped up two months of debate on the reform Bush has sought for more than two years. The bill aims to stem illegal immigration, but welcome illegal immigrants who have already been integrated into US society.

Bush initiated passage of the test. And said effortless, strong, common sense solutions both economic and border security to end our "honor America's great tradition of the melting pot."

"I look forward to working together with both the House of Representatives and the Senate to produce a bill for me to sign into law," he said.

However, the bill's final adoption is hardly guaranteed, as it differs sharply from a tougher bill passed in the lower House of Representatives, and the two must be reconciled.

"Today is not the day to celebrate. We have won a big battle but not the war," Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid said.

The Senate bill would create 200,000 temporary work visas for foreigners who take low-skill jobs here, and double the number of US Border Patrol agents on the border with Mexico.

The bill also includes funding to build a 400-kilo wall along the Mexican border to block illegal entry.

Correction

IN THE MAY 26 issue, the story—"Saving Disney's old 'Empire House'"—on Page A2 2 named that Gertrudes Duque had moved his adopted from a nursery to buy a "plane ticket" for the United States in the early 1960s. According to Duque's eldest daughter, Renato Duque-Rubio, her father went to the United States in 1958 by taking a ship, not a plane. Duque and another Filipino boarded the ship that took them to the United States at Port Sabangan in Boras but in the same story, the ownership of one of the "Rubio na Baco" in the town was erroneously attributed to the family of Supreme Court Associate Justice Consuelo Ynares-Santiago. That house, which is now in the ancestral home of the family of Carpio-Morales, is owned by the Chavez Lim family.

* * *

Readers may send short requests for corrections of factual errors, in writing (by fax, Data Gate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2nd Building, Chino Roces Avenue cor. Makati-Ayala Ave., Makati City, fax no. 897-2670 or 896-6000) or e-mail address (inquirer@inquirer.com.ph).

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Hot issue in elections

Immigration is likely to be a particularly hot issue during mid-term elections in November and some Republican proponents worry that its failure could prove very costly on the campaign trail.

The House bill has sparked some of the largest protests in recent US history, with millions of predominantly Hispanic demonstrators taking to the streets in major American cities since late March to defend their contribution to US society and the economy.

"The American people may have different views as to how we should address this issue, but I think all of them think we ought to address it," said McCain. AFP

De Venecia endorses $503-M NorthRail project

By Philip C. Tubeza

HOUSE SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA Thursday pushed for the controversial $503 million Northrail transit system, which is now under Senate investigation for alleged irregularities.

De Venecia maintained that his role in the project was shortlisted and that he had been politely discussing the Philippine railway modernization program for years.

Besides China, he said, he had also invited South Korea, Australia, Germany and Saudi Arabia to participate "because we need additional, not sequential, development of the rail systems in Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao."

The Speaker's name was again linked to the rail project on Tuesday after Northrail Corp. president Jose Cortes told the Senate that De Venecia framed meetings between government officials and Chinese financiers representatives in his Makati residence.

But De Venecia said everyone knew that there were only two venues for his meetings—at the Speaker's office in Congress when the House of Representatives is in session and at his Makati residence. "This has been my practice since 1987," he said.

Unlike the existing one-track system, the project is a double-track system that will lay more than 62 kilometers of track connected to forty 250,000 commuters daily.

The project is funded by a $400-million loan from the Chinese government with the Philippines providing $100 million as its counterpart fund.

When it was launched last year, Minister Hao Qian of the Chinese Embassy had called it the "largest Chinese project in Southeast Asia," and the first 20-year concessionary loan ever extended by China to any government.

De Venecia said the government was also pushing for a Visayan rail system possibly with support from the German, Australian and Saudi governments.

SUBIC RAPE CASE

Court to hold hearings 4x a week

By Tarra V. Quismundo

HEARINGS ON THE RAPE CASE filed by a Filipina woman against four US Marines would be held four times a week starting June 5 in a bid to conclude the trial at the soonest possible time.

Working under time pressure, Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 139 Judge Benjamin Pozon yesterday ruled from there to four times a week the Prosecutor of hearings on the Subic rape case.

The hearings would be held Monday, Wednesday, Thursdays and Fridays.

"As of now, with the number of witnesses to be presented and the possibility of the presentation of rebuttal and sur-rebuttal witnesses, the court is not taking any chances. The offended party has a right, the accused have their rights," said Pozon, during a pretrial conference yesterday afternoon.

Pozon made the adjustment when he insisted that at least 51 settings be made to accommodate the presentation of all prosecution and defense witnesses.

The change in schedule took into consideration the time needed for possible rebuttal proceedings.

The prosecution intends to present 44 witnesses to prove that the four accused—Staff Sgt. Chad Brian Carpender, Lance Cpls. Keith Silkwood, Dominic Duplantis and Daniel Smith—conspired to rape a Filipino woman on board a moving van inside the Subic Bay Freeport on Nov. 1 last year.

The court aims to wrap up the prosecution's presentation of evidence and witnesses within three months.

The defense, meanwhile, said in open court that they would present at least seven witnesses, including the four accused.

"That's humanly cruel for us to spend the days just doing this case. We have to prepare for the case, talk to witnesses. It's going to be hard for prosecution. We do not object to a speedy trial but it should be a reasonable schedule," said private prosecutor Evalyn Ursua, adverse objection to the new schedule was denied by Pozon.

"Why are we having this kind of schedule? This is not for us Filipinos.

It is for the Americans, because of the VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement). This is basically imposing conveniens on the prosecution such that in the end, our case will be prejudiced," she added.

The VFA, an RP-US agreement that allowed troops from both nations to engage in joint military exercises, imposed a one-year deadline for Philippine courts to conclude proceedings against US servicemen.

Pozon has yet to rule on the prosecution's question seeking to position on when the countdown on the one-year period began. The prosecution sustained he lieved it should begin from April 28 when the accused were arraigned. For the defense, the countdown began on Dec. 27 last year, when the case was filed in court.

The victim's mother, meanwhile, said she was pleased with the progress of the case, adding "I am happy that the case is set to begin. I hope this would be conclusive. And I hope many people would support her."

During yesterday's proceedings, Pozon asked the prosecution if other witnesses could be dropped from in list, as some may be testifying on the same facts. But prosecution lawyers maintained that they should not be restricted from presenting all witnesses they deemed necessary to prove their case, as they had the burden of proving the alleged rape.

'Like cutting deal with Hitler's men'

From page A1

owned by Marcos and his cronies after the dictator was ousted in a People Power revolt.

He was reacting to moves by PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede, apparently with Malacañang's support, to negotiate a compromise with the Marcos family over Marcos-linked assets variously estimated at between $5 billion and $10 billion.

In an open letter to Ms Arroyo published by his group's magazine Bluepaper, Salonga called on the President to order the PCGG commissioners to pull out of negotiations with the Marcoses.

"Despite our hunch that we are the only Christian country in Asia, the Philippines is already known to be among the most corrupt in Asia and the rest of the world," Salonga said in his letter.

Sense of right, wrong

"A compromise agreement, such as has been outlined by PCGG Commissioner Abcede, will surely make us the most notoriously corrupt among Asian nations and a pariah to the whole international community."

Salonga told the business there were fundamental issues at stake.

"You can't give up the moral sense of right and wrong ... If we enter a compromise agreement with the Marcoses, we'll be showing that crime pays."

Salonga took exception to Abcede's argument that after 20 years, it was time to negotiate a settlement with the Marcos family.

"Allow me to say that questions of right or wrong do not fade away as Singapore after 20 or 30 years," Salonga said.

"Upon now, the Marcoses are telling the people they have no more money and yet the Marcoses are saying they can pay off the country's foreign and domestic debts," Salonga said, referring to a boast once made by former first lady Imelda Marcos.

She has also said the Marcos family has so much wealth that she no longer knows some of its total assets.

"Where did they get all this money? If your legitimate income is P30 million and your total assets are worth more than 100 times your legitimate income, the proof is not positive that all these are legitimate acquisitions," Salonga said.

Lost evidence

The PCGG cannot use the excuse that some of the documentary pieces of evidence against the Marcoses had been lost through the years.

He told the Marcos documents seized by the PCGG in its cases versus the family were "duplicate originals" or photocopies that may still be presented as valid pieces of evidence. If these were lost, the originals are still in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, he said.

"There is also a set of duplicate originals that I brought to the bank of Philippine Islands," Salonga said.

Salonga, however, said he no longer knew what had become of the duplicate originals inside the BSP vault. He said he gave the key to the documents' vault to his successor, Ramon Diaz, who then died.

Evidence in USA

"For good measure, another set of duplicate originals are with PCGG lawyers in California. They computerized and classified these documents," he added.

Salonga said the proposed out-of-court settlements with the Marcoses also faced serious legal obstacles.

"It is completely against the 1998 decision of the Supreme Court penned by then Associate Justice and now Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban," Salonga said, referring to the SC ruling striking down the PCGG's first compromise deal with the Marcoses.

The Supreme Court, at that time, ruled that the provision in the agreement about the government canceling dismissal of court cases against the Marcoses "is in no uncertain terms an judicial power, particularly in regard to criminal jurisdiction."

The high court also said that a deal with the Marcoses would be a warrant for public officials to amass public funds illegally "since there is no corresponding compromise their liability in exchange for only a portion of their ill-gotten wealth."

Change of tack

Abcede, for his part, indicated he would now call low about the Marcos issue.

"I intend to keep my silence on these matters other than one last statement, after which I will be inclined to talk about my non-fluence or usefulness (more only when public interest so demands)," Abcede told reporters yesterday.

He said he would invoke "all of my existing hours on forgiveness, backbreaking official work, tireless pump built-in and tireless government efforts, rather than to bring to many days speaking in my defense."

"My inviting files, Marcos to my party was my way of announcing to the world that the human first lady and I were indeed in good enough terms to jointly embark on a possible amicable settlement on the disputed Marcos wealth. Mrs. Marcos never accepted my invitation for a dance and I am in enough to accept," Abcede said.

Abcede promised to keep the people informed not only of "the final terms of any settlement that may be arrived at, but also of the twists and turns that (he) may see our way to that possible settlement." While a report from Alcede Pepito

No deal, says FVR

By Cynthia D. Balana

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL RAMOS strongly opposed a compromise on the Marcos assets.

In a press conference, Ramos said that while entering into a compromise was a normal negotiating procedure, this should not apply in criminal cases.

"There must be no negotiations or settlement in regard to the criminal cases. That's nonnegotiable," he said. "In regard to actions or properties or dividends or acquisitions of the wealth, I have no comment because I am not up-to-date on that."

Ramos reminded the PCGG that it had been mandated by the Constitution and the law to pursue the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses, the proceeds of which should go to the land reform program.

He said that in 1997, when he was still president, $200 million of the recovered hidden wealth of the Marcoses were turned over to the government through negotiations with [illegible], not with the Marcoses.

"Every effort should be directed to bring to closure of the hidden wealth," Ramos stressed. "The principle, to begin with, is true: due to public money."

Asked about reports that PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede was dancing with former first lady Imelda Marcos during the Valentine's Day party recently, Ramos said it was improper.

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Why Enron founding chair, ex-CEO convicted

From page A1

As the verdicts were read, Lay slumped, sighed heavily and shook his head, his sibling wife Linda tightly clutching his arms.

Shilling looked shaken.

US District Judge Sim Lake set sentencing for Sept. 11.

In the courtroom, Lay and his sprawling family members gathered in a circle, clasped hands and prayed.

"God's got another plan right now," Lay, the son of a preacher, said without tears. "We'll all come through this stronger and more reliant on God."

Outside the courthouse, he said the verdict had "shocked" him.

"I firmly believe I am innocent of the charges against me," Lay said. "If I were a CEO today, I would say it sends a very dangerous message. (It) basically makes honest business practices criminal."

Lay, 64, Enron founder and former chairman, was convicted of all six counts of conspiracy and fraud and faces a maximum of 45 years in prison.

185 years

Skilling, 52, former chief executive officer, was found guilty of 19 counts of conspiracy, fraud, insider trading and making false statements which, combined, carry a maximum sentence of 185 years.

In a separate trial for Lay, Judge Lake found him guilty of all four bank fraud charges for illegally using money from $75 million in personal loans to buy stock.

Each of those four charges carries a maximum of 30 years, but experts say he is likely to be sentenced to more than six months for each because he paid off the loans and the lenders suffered no damage.

Lay and Skilling, who once moved comfortably in the highest circles of society and politics, will remain free on a $1-million bond until they are sentenced.

7th largest company

Enron, which at its height was the nation's seventh-largest company, collapsed in December 2001 into the biggest US bankruptcy at the time amid disclosures it used off-the-books deals to hide billions of dollars in debts and inflate profits.

It also was revealed that chief financial officer Andy Fastow had loaned the company of $600 million while running the side deals.

Prosecutors charged that Lay and Skilling knew Enron's reports of booming profits were just financial trickery, but told the world all was well to keep the stock price up even as the Houston-based power trader slid toward its demise.

Deputy US Attorney General Paul McNulty hailed the convictions.

Message of verdict

"The message of today's verdict is simple: Our criminal laws will be enforced just as vigorously against corporate executives as ... with street criminals," he said.

White House spokesperson Tony Snow said the administration "has been pretty clear there's no tolerance for corporate corruption."

Attorneys for Lay and Skilling vowed to fight the convictions.

Skilling was always philosophical.

"I think we fought a good fight but some things work and some things don't," he told reporters. "Obviously I am disappointed but that is the way the system works."

Lay attorney Mike Ramsey also promised an appeal.

"We're disappointed in the verdict mean," he said, meaning the trial should not have been held in Houston, where Enron was based.

Former Enron employee Chris Jones, 35, stood outside the courthouse as his former bosses left the building.

"If it [the guilty verdict] hadn't happened it would have been an open wound," he said. "This brings closure for some people."

In sentencing Lay and Skilling said they painted a rosy picture of the company's success "they believed it was a great shape, not because they wanted to cover up problems."

Key testimony

Skilling resigned suddenly in August 2001 after just six months as CEO and was replaced by Lay. The two men testified that Skilling left because he was burned out.

They blamed media coverage and Fastow's thievery for a financial crisis that sank the firm they built from a quiet regulated business into an international trading powerhouse.

Jurors, who were in their sixth day of deliberations, said some of the most important testimony came from former Enron treasurer Ben Glisan, who was already serving a five-year prison sentence.

Glisan testified Skilling and Lay knew Enron was in deep financial trouble and tried to hide it.

Fastow tearfully told the jury of his misdeeds and said Skilling and Lay were deeply involved in a massive cover-up. He has pleaded guilty to conspiracy in exchange for a 10-year jail sentence.

Prosecutors said Lay and Skilling milked Enron for hundreds of millions of dollars and lived lives of luxury while driving the company into bankruptcy.

Lay took home $220 million in compensation from the sale of Enron shares and options through 2001, while Skilling got $130 million, testimony till Attorney John Thornton said.

Lay used his and the company's money to gain political power by donating heavily to candidates, particularly Republicans and especially the Bush family. He was the biggest donor to President George W. Bush, who before the Enron scandal referred to him recently as "Kenny Boy."

No fraud, at all

While Lay and Skilling left Enron with their fortunes intact, hundreds of employees lost their jobs and saw their savings wiped out as Enron stock lost all value.

Lay and Skilling entered the trial with a claim that shocked many: Not only were they innocent of wrongdoing, no fraud at all occurred at Enron.

On the witness stand, Lay declared and defended, even to the lowest worker.

Lay arrogantly defended his extravagant lifestyle, including a $200,000 yacht for wife Linda's birthday party.

"It was difficult to run all that lifestyle like a regime," Lay said. AP Reuters

RP cop hurt in E. Timor; 200 Pinoys alerted

From page A1

rebels stormed Timorese soldiers opened fire on unarmed police in the Timorese capital of Dili, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

Lapuz, one of five Philippine National Police officers serving as advisers with the United Nations Office in Timor, is "stable and out of danger," the DFA said.

He was airlifted to Darwin, Australia, for medical treatment along with another wounded UN officer.

Lapuz's wife, Rochelle, has been informed of the incident, the DFA said.

Civil war

Besides the five PNP men, a Filipino military officer is also working at the UN office in Dili, it said.

East Timor lies about 320 km northwest of Australia in the eastern end of the Indonesian archipelago. It is approximately 1,300 km south of Mindanao.

Foreign troops struggled Friday to quell civil war in the desperately poor country which won independence from Indonesia in 1999.

Nine Timorese police were killed in Thursday's violence during which Lapuz was wounded, in a separate incident, a mob torched a house on the outskirts of the capital Dili after spraying it with gunfire, killing 18 of its people inside.

C-130 on standby

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo has asked Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. to have an Air Force C-130 placed on standby "to evacuate around 200 Filipinos from Dili, if the need arises," a DFA statement said.

Romulo also instructed Ambassador Roy Quiam to proceed to Dili to assess the security situation there "as well as to review the evacuation plans formulated by our embassy for its staff and the (other) Filipinos."

Filipinos in East Timor work as lawyers, educators, trainers, engineers, accountants, construction workers, religious missionaries and domestic helpers, the DFA said.

The Philippine Embassy there is composed of seven personnel, including four Filipinos and and three locally hired staff.

Conflicting reports

Reports on Thursday's violence were conflicting.

Philippine Ambassador Pedro Aguilo-dan Ong said Lapuz was hit in the arm, as UN "rebel renegade soldiers opened fire on unarmed members of the East Timor National Police as they were being evacuated by the UN police and military authorities from the police headquarters in Dili at around 1:30 p.m."

Twenty-seven other people were wounded, he said.

East Timor Foreign Minister and Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta, heading the diplomatic corps, "expressed sincere concern over the prospects for peace and reconciliation," the DFA said.

Foreign news agencies gave a different account of Thursday's shooting.

Machete-wielding youths

The Associated Press said it was members of the tiny country's 600-strong army who opened fire on the police, sparking hours of allying themselves with machete-wielding youths.

The East Timor attack ended only after UN police and military advisers negotiated a ceasefire with the Timorese soldiers.

The sound of heavy machinegun fire, mortar and small-arms was heard from nearby hills and machete-wielding youths were seen mopping a bus on Dili's outskirts, though they allowed it to pass unharmed.

The violence followed the government's decision in March to fire 600 soldiers—40 percent of the military—after they staged a months-long strike to protest poor pay and conditions, moves that highlighted the deep divisions in the country divided along east-west lines.

The violence that began last April has claimed 25 lives, 20 of them in the past four days.

Guerrilla warfare

After engaging in deadly skirmishes month, rebel troops fled the capital, setting up positions in the surrounding hills and threatening guerrilla warfare if they were not reinstated.

Some police officers have also begun to ally themselves with the disgruntled soldiers, Jean-Marie Guehenno, the chief of the UN peacekeeping department, said in New York.

He said Thursday's shooting at the national police headquarters apparently was triggered when the officers were escorted from the building, once the soldiers had "become restless and started to leave."

"What I understand, in the very tense situation that existed there, there was some movement and then soldiers apparently opened fire and that's when the police officers were killed," said Guehenno.

Peacekeepers arrive

Australia, which led a multinational peacekeeping force in East Timor in 1999 that ended a bloody rampage by Indonesian troops and their militia proxies, said it would send the nation up to 1,300 troops, along with ships, helicopters and armored personnel carriers.

Hundreds of heavily armed Australian forces arrived Thursday and Friday, with the remainder expected to reach East Timor security on Saturday.

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said her nation would send up 120 troops. Portugal, which colonized East Timor for four centuries until 1975, also plans to send about 120 troops, while Malaysia pledged 100.

Broken skeletons

The six people inside the torched house on the outskirts of Dili—five women and a child—were little more than bones and bodies, witnesses said.

The attackers—four men, dressed in black and wearing balaclavas, weighted down with ammo in the middle of the night, broke the windows of the concrete dwelling, doused it in petrol and set it ablaze.

"It was a revenge attack," said Jose Ribeiro, standing outside the remains of the house. "It's just like 1999."

'Worst day'

That year is etched into the memory of the Timorese, a toxic stew of the vote for independence from Indonesia descended into brutal violence that left nearly 200,000 people dead or displaced.

US Ambassador Joseph Bowe came to see the carnage for himself. "It's one of the worst days in the history of this country since independence, and we're all hopeful things will get a lot better very dramatically," he said. With reports from AP AFP

Cop in Palawan broadcaster's slay sacked from service

By Marlon Ramos and Jaileen P. Tesorio
INQ Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMP MUNOZ (LIG...) THE PO... lieutenant suspected to be behind the murder of Puerto Princesa City broadcaster Fernando "Dindo" Batul was discharged from the police service yesterday.

Chief Supt. Debbie Gonzo, Mi... mamopo police chief, said he or... dered the dismissal of PO2 Ramon Ardiente after he was implicated in the killing of a certain Mitchell Sabarre. Police said the recording of the victim's companion in Puerto Princesa on March 1, 2003.

Gonzo clarified that his dismissal of the erring policeman had nothing to do with the brutal case.

"The dismissal case against him has been pending for some time now. It just happened that he was named in this new case," Gonzo told the inquirer.

The Palawan-based affiliate service (PJES) of the Mimaropa police had found Ardiente guilty of grave misconduct charges filed against him for the killing of Sabarre.

But instead of discharging him, the PJES meted a "force resignation" penalty against the policeman.

Ardiente, 36, assigned at the 452nd police provincial mobile group in Palawan, was identified by four witnesses as one of the two armed men who gunned down Batul while he was on his way to work on Monday.

Police have already filed murder charges against Ardiente, who is now detained at the Palawan provincial jail, and another suspect, still at large, in the Batul slay.

The case was raffled to Judge Chito Abeligallawa of Branch 51.

Police chief Inspector Lamoltao has instructed investigators to make sure that "no stone will be left unturned" against Ardiente.

Chief Supt. Raul Gesite personally arrested Ardiente in Camp Crame on Wednesday afternoon. He was at the camp to attend to an administrative charge filed by his wife and children who accused him of failing to support them financially.

A check showed that Ardiente was listed in the passenger manifest of Air Philippines flight 19-111 that left Puerto Princesa City at 11:22 a.m. of May 22, some five hours after Batul was shot dead by two motorcycle-riding men.

His plane arrived in Manila at 12:53 p.m.

According to PNP records, Ardiente joined the police service on Sept. 18, 1998 and had been assigned in Palawan ever since.

With Luigi A. del Puerto

GMA urges int'l finance execs to invest in RP

DESCRIBING HERSELF AS A "PROUD ASSERTIVE salesperson" for the country, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday told an international audience of financial market practitioners that she was bullish on the nation's prospects and urged them to bring their investments here.

But the real the was also a realist and knew there was much to be done given the problems plaguing the nation, including poverty and corruption.

"I come before you here today full of hope, inspired by realists, that we are a nation worth the attention and the investments of the financial markets," Ms Arroyo told over 500 financial practitioners gathered at the Philippine International Convention Center for the 40th Annual Conference of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Financial Markets Association (Mafc) Congress Philippines.

Launching into her sales pitch, the President said her government had created over five million jobs in the past five years and that inflation was easing up. Exports grew 16 percent last March and the budget surplus in April was the highest in nine years, she said.

She also noted that the country was enjoying a tourism boom and that prime sites like Clark and Subic were being developed. At the first time, she said, the government was collecting revenues needed for investments in infrastructure, healthcare, education and job creation.

"My government has started vigorous efforts to balance the budget, keep the overall currency situation safe from scrutinies, push growth and pursue political renewal," Ms Arroyo said.

The President said she had invested a lot of her time and effort in getting the nation re-... gaged in global efforts to help moderate it.

Christine Avendaño

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2,000 job-seekers duped of P35M

By Jovenia Arong

ALMOST 2,000 FILIPINOS DREAMING OF LU... crative employment abroad were duped into forking out close to P35 million for non-existent jobs in the first four months of the year, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration said yesterday.

POEA Administrator Rosalinda Umagdlin-Baldoz said she was unhappy that the office had not been able to fully prove charges against most suspected illegal recruiters because many complainants agreed to withdraw civil action after their money was returned.

She advised workers seeking job overseas to double-check with the agency to make sure recruiters had valid licenses and to be informed about the modus operandi of illegal recruiters.

From January to April 2006, Baldoz said, suspected illegal recruiters managed to swindle P34,787,794 from 1,710 victims, most of them coming from the cities of Manila, Quezon and Makati and the provinces of Cavite, Bulacan and Pangasinan.

She also revealed that a number of licensed recruitment agencies were having administrative complaints for offering jobs in the United Kingdom, South Korea, Sweden and United Arab Emirates that were found to be non-existent.

The non-existent job orders were for Filipinos to workers, caregivers, farm workers, domestic helpers and seafarers.

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AMDG QUALS

Third on Everest …

From page A1

"It was never a competition. You need a lot [to run a race]. Saying first is not significant. It's good there were three of us to meet the same objectives," a cursed Gaskue told a press conference at the GMA 7 network.

Besides, there are other surprises from the Filipino team to unwrap, he said. His next target: The South Pole.

Everest, the world's highest peak, was not the ultimate adversary he has but "just a big mark."

"One of the things you will realize when you're there is that it's never ending. You will face many triumphs. Always there is that inner energy, a struggle to do something more," Gaskue said.

Good theory and applause greeted Gaskue as he stepped into the arrival concourse of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport at about 2:45 p.m. yesterday.

He flew in from Bangkok with his support team, Henry Sekiguchi, president of the 1IP Communications, and the GMA 7 Everest coverage team led by reporter Jiggy Manicad.

Gaskue and Santa are scheduled to arrive next Sunday.

Low-key departure

The rousing welcome was a stark contrast to Gaskue's low-key departure for Nepal three months ago, covered only by GMA 7 and the Inquirer.

Wearing an outdoor shirt and khaki trousers, the shy Gaskue had to be egged on to wear his outfit for the airport press conference, apparently overlooked by his mission organizers.

Gaskue began by saying how happy he was that his feat and that of the two other Filipino mountaineers has had a positive impact on fellow Filipinos.

"It's inspiring to many," he said, adding that he would engage in more adventures and share the experience with others by writing about them.

"I'm sharing this success with all Filipinos. The is a shared feat. We are recognized in the international community that the Filipino can, and today any Pinoy" a smiling Gaskue said.

Before the start of the airport press conference, Gaskue met briefly with resident Arroyo and Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, who admitted to being a "private" person who preferred to hang out with friends from the University of the Philippines Mountaineers (UPM).

The bachelor mountaineer was mobbed by female employees of the network. But it would seem mountain is a challenge he would prefer not to take on yet.

"It's tougher to get married than to climb Everest. It's hard enough to manage yourself, you still have to manage another person," said the 37-year-old mountain technology manager.

Reaching impossible

For Gaskue, climbing is more about the self than anything else. "You will know when you see when you climb mountains. You will realize that nothing is impossible," he said.

But for now, Gaskue is just glad to be home and spend time with his family.

"I'm more relieved than anything else. Now there is no pressure," he said.

"Thanks for the warm welcome and thanks to my supporters and media who allowed me to share this experience with our countrymen," he said.

The Everest season this year was the second deadliest with at least 10 people dying in the attempt to scale the summit. Gaskue said he felt the danger throughout his climb.

"The Khumbu Icefall was already melting and there were a lot of crevasses. In some parts, we wouldn't dig—we jump [over] because some of the members had already come off," he said.

Gaskue could have had the chance to be the "First Pinoy on Everest."

When he left for Nepal on March 2, he was the only Filipino attempting to scale Everest.

But two weeks later, he was followed by Ornedo Antonio and Filipino-Canadian Daniel Scrivener, who are members of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE).

Ornedo and Santa's climb was sponsored by the ABS-CBN television network so that the Philippine conquest of Everest rapidly developed into a competition between the country's two biggest broadcast networks.

Gaskue said the scenario changed in April when many others attempted the climb. He said his "mind-set" changed.

"I am not to relish that I must always be first. There are so many other opportunities for adventure. I'm content in just one of three," he said in a mixture of English and Filipino.

"Definitely I wanted to conquer Everest. It was a personal goal," Gaskue said.

"But being No. 1 is just the icing on the cake," he said.

Gaskue said he was not there to race. "I just concentrate on pace," he said.

Gaskue said he had met Ornedo and Santa in mid-June "overnighting's DC." He said Ornedo was a frequent visitor at his quarters at the Base Camp "since he got easily bored."

Gov't bars Satur from leaving …

From page A1

power from President Macapagal-Arroyo in February.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez had earlier ordered that the Batasan 5 be put on the watch list. But the Makati court has yet to issue a hold-departure order on any of them.

"It is now obvious that the Arroyo government and the justice secretary being protected and unmoded by the Cojuangcos, [from without] a court order backing it, the Cojuangcos has curbed my constitutional right to travel. Di, is acting like the highest court in the land," Ocampo said.

The Cojuangcos control of the executive secretary, the justice secretary, the defense and interior secretaries, the national security adviser, and the chiefs of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, Armed Forces and Philippine National Police.

Ocampo said he could have chosen to push through with his trip because a watch list order did not carry the same force and effect as a court-issued hold-departure order.

But he decided to go through the pace of seeking Gonzalez's permission to travel, he said.

In his account to the Inquirer, Ocampo said it was Gonzalez who informed him of the Cojuangcos' move.

"Where are talked over the phone the other day, he said, 'I have had news for you. The Cojuangcos, Chavit [Singson] and others are up to your ass [request]."

Gonzalez told Ocampo that he had to secure a travel permit from the House of Representatives.

Ocampo pointed out that a copy of the travel order issued by House Secretary General Roberto Nazareno was attached to the letter he sent to the Department of Justice on Wednesday.

"I haven't read it," Gonzalez replied, adding that only Representative Dakila Carlos Cua (Quirino 2nd District) and Speaker Jose de Venecia III (Pangasinan 6th District) who had also been invited as a speaker and had no pending case, could extend the condonation.

The International Conference on the Condemnation of Illegitimate Debts, which runs from May 27 to 29, is sponsored by the International Nongovernment Organization Partners in Indonesian Development.

Travel authority

On May 16, Navarro-issued Ocampo travel authority for his trip to Jakarta, certifying that he was eligible for exemption from the travel ban.

Ocampo said the Department of Foreign Affairs overlooked his diplomatic passport and issued him six-page exemption voucher.

He said Gonzalez even assured him early this week that Gonzalez himself would recommend the approval of his travel request because "technically, you have no case."

In a May 24 memorandum to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, a copy of which was furnished to the Inquirer, Gonzalez said he was asking the Courts to decide on Ocampo's request "in view of the inclusion of [Ocampo's] name in the watch list order issued by me in connection with the rebellion case filed against the Batasan 5."

But Gonzalez made his position clear in the memorandum. Personally, I'm opposed to the lifting of the watch list order ... because it might adversely affect the rebellion case filed against Ocampo before the Makati RTC. Moreover, to grant his request for clearance to travel abroad will open the floodgate for the other accused ... to seek similar requests ... and consequently send a wrong signal to the public that this government sees against them is weak."

'Puppet master'

Ocampo said Gonzalez had put the justice department under the supervision of the "secret cabal and harder personalities within the Cabinet."

"Now it can be told that the Cots is the puppet master pulling the strings on Gonzalez, their mastermen even lightning rod," Ocampo said, adding:

"The prosecution of the Batasan 5 and Brig. Gen. Lim [retired chief of the high echelon of Cojuangco executives, and Gonzalez is merely taking orders from them."

Ocampo pointed out that the proper procedure would have been for the Cots and Gonzalez to ask the Makati RTC to issue a court hold-departure order.

"There is no court order barring the Cots. In fact, it violated the prerogatives of the Makati RTC," he said.

Ocampo said his request for travel clearance was based on the Supreme Court ruling declaring unconstitutional government acts under Proclamation No. 1017, including General Order No. 5, which put the country under a week-long state of emergency in Feb 24 2006.

"That ruling also rendered null and void my name's inclusion in the March 1 search-list order issued by Gonzalez," he said.

Ocampo and Gonzalez should see that this be would try to "escape prosecution or prosecution."

Pope names new bishop for Manila

POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS APpointed another bishop to assist Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales in running the country's premier diocese.

Fr. Broderick Pabillo was named auxiliary bishop of Manila, joining another auxiliary prelate, Bishop Nestor Jose Cutiyo.

At 51, Pabillo will be among the country's youngest bishops.

The Vatican announced Pabillo's appointment a week Wednesday and was subsequently relayed to the Philippine Church and media last Friday morning by the new appointee's namesake, Archbishop Fernando Filoni.

Pabillo was in the mountains of Palanan where he's been on a mission since 1999 when the news came out, according to Rocky Yumang, communications director of the archdiocese.

Christian F. Esguerra

Mining probe body's recommendations backed

A PROTESTANT BLOC HAS ENdorsed the Baguio Commission's recommendation to stop mining on Itogon-Suyoc mined and the review of the Mining Act.

"We urge all Filipinos to support and uphold the recommendations of the Baguio Commission. We reiterate our call to our lawmakers to repeal this very destructive law to protect God's creation," the National Council of Churches in the Philippines said in a statement.

Marvic Berondo, the NCCP secretary general, said the report of the fact-finding body headed by Itogon-Suyoc Bishop Arturo Bastes "validated the negative effects of large-scale mining to the people and to the environment."

The NCCP represents 11 million members of mainly Protestant churches.

The Baguio Commission was created by Malacañang to investigate allegations that the operations of the Australian-based Lafayette Mining on Itogon-Suyoc had contaminated the waters of Ucab-ga.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said he would base his decision on the fate of the mining company on the report of the commission as well as the results of a dialogue between Lafayette and Itogon-Suyoc residents.

The municipal council of Itogon-Suyoc favors letting Lafayette continue its operations provided it complies with environmental and public health laws.

A member of the commission yesterday said environmental concerns should be given more weight in deciding whether or not Lafayette should be allowed to stay.

"In all issues, I would say that the environment, effects on schools are long-term, should be given very very high priority in decision-making."

Environment Undersecretary Jesse Pared

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Toadyism

IN SUBSTANCE AND FORM, THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government's rush to settle with the Marcoses in connection with their ill-gotten wealth cases is a point too far. There's much controversy about the moral implications of settling with the Marcoses; the issue itself is a moral millstone around the neck of the Filipino people, and more especially of the PCGG which is

EDITORIAL

tasked to pursue pleadings issues against the Marcoses and their cronies.

But even increasingly overintense is the point from in which the PCGG is pushing the envelope. It does not seem to mind the moral burden being reckoned in its apparent act to connect with the enemy.

The connectivity is reflected in PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede's invitation for Imelda Marcos to attend his birthday party yesterday. Now, it may be Abcede's private business whom to invite over to his parties, but considering that he is a public official assigned to prosecute the Marcoses, who face 500 ill-gotten wealth cases, it is the public's business to remind him his private business may be the public's privation. The invitation smacks of sleeping with the enemy.

But, alas, Abcede does not seem to know his enemies. "I just wanted to have fun with friends," he said, in defense of his birthday party. So there he reminder Imelda Marcos is personal friend? How does that relate with his "public" task of prosecuting the ill-gotten wealth cases against her? Whose side is he on, anyway?

Abcede said that since he is pursuing an amicable settlement with the Marcoses, "I have to be amicable with them." This seems to betray a certain enthusiasm, if not toadyism.

Even more egregious is Abcede's explanation why he is being amicable to Imelda Marcos: "I am negotiating from a position of strength, but I would also like them to be in the proper frame of mind so they will be open to a compromise."

The semantic indicate otherwise: the PCGG is not negotiating from a position of strength, but of extreme weakness. How else could one explain Abcede's attempt to be overamicable with Imelda Marcos? How else could one explain his attempts to soothe and refer the Marcoses so that they would be "in the proper frame of mind" and "be open to a compromise"?

The last phrase, in fact, signals who has the upper hand in the issue. It reveals that the PCGG is pursuing a policy of rapprochement and even of appeasement with the Marcoses in order to soften their stance and "be open to a compromise." The Marcoses are in a position of strength, while the PCGG is in a position of . . . slavish-ness?

Abcede, otherwise a lawyer who has had a credible private practice and someone who really knows his law and legal tactics, should realize that by pushing for a settlement, the government is doing the Marcoses a service. It has practically reversed the process of legal settlement. Instead of the Marcoses, it's the government suing for peace. It's the prosecutor suing for a way out. It's the hunter being hunted. We see the PCGG attack dog with its tail wagging between its legs!

We would have been spared the unseemly sight of a government doing the bidding of the Marcoses if the PCGG has bothered to meet with the counsel to with the issue. Abcede and PCGG Chair Cleofas Sabio have been dragging the prospect of an amicable settlement with the Marcoses. Abcede may have deemed he has been "strong-arming" it all along, but at the least, he seems to have offered the prospect as a trial balloon to test the public's receptivity to the idea. Either way, he has power the public's reaction, and in the process, weakened the government's positions. He is handing the Marcoses a legal and moral victory on a silver platter.

Inevitably, the bad form leads to a corrupt soul, as its moral core. If the government had pursued the moral case against the Marcoses, then it would strengthen the legal claims against them. Shoddy underpin all the legal claims against the Marcos dictatorship, and Abcede and the PCGG should not forget that. If the people don't stick to the moral, then they risk becoming moral lemons. Or at the least, they risk becoming toadies to the Marcoses.

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An imperfect Constitution

SEPARATE OPINION

Raguel A. Cruz

LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR AT THE OUTSET. Those against the Cha-cha are not necessarily against re-examining and changing the Constitution. It's the procedure being employed by the dancers that we object to. That will be the subject for this column tomorrow.

The Constitution of 1987 was formed by an appointive Constitutional Commission and not by a constitutional convention of elected delegates. While the commissioners were generally competent—a number of them exceptionally so—they were still lower in the political stratosphere of the electorate and its special interests.

One might say that their common qualification, irrespective of their expertise (or most of it) is the art of consultation-making, win the confidence in each of them of President Corazon Aquino. They did not even have to file bonds. It had to be a final, consistent Commission on Appointments. An intransigent of the time before will reveal some obscure members who, ironically, did not become prominent in their secluded realness.

The constitutional czars from various sectors took drastic precautions, which could be seen reasonably their more worthy to carry their destinies. They appointed their headwork one month later and recommended to the President that it be submitted to the people not within 60 days as originally scheduled but of no three months.

The campaign for the ratification of the draft Constitution was led by President Aquino herself. Opposition to the document, while spirited, was largely decapitated and consequently ineffective. Many people, while doubtful about some of its provisions and especially its length, nevertheless noted that the proposed Constitution because they felt it would provide the stability the country sorely need at that time.

Ratification was approved by 76.29 percent of the electorate with only 23.71 percent against. The Constitution became effective on Feb. 2, 1987.

The most notable flaw of the Constitution of 1987 is its verbosity and consequent prolixity that have dampened people interest in what should be the country's treasure of the nation. It would seem that every one of the members of the Commission wanted to put in it his two centavos worth, and unfortunately succeeded, thereby expanding the charter to unwieldy dimensions.

This, in some of its provisions, the Constitution sounds more like a political speech than a formal document setting only basic legal principles. It is full of platitudes. This is true of the policies on social justice and the subsections on many articles should have been avoided with less loquacity to give the legislature more leeway in their implementation.

Such policies could have been expressed briefly enough free of subclauses if the framers had performed their solemn task with less personal complacency, let alone the rule of the legislature. What is unseen is the production of unseen subjects that have no place in an austere Constitution, like sports, arts, drugs and even advertising.

Especially pretentious is the verbose language of some of its commands like the following contemporary of circumlocution in Art. XVI, Sec. 10.

"The State shall provide the policy environment for the full development of Filipino capability and the emergence of communication structures suitable to the needs and aspirations of the nation and for the free flow of information, ideas, and images while ensuring its responsible use in accordance with a policy that respects the Freedom of speech and of the press."

Excuse me?

This detail in the supreme law of the Philippines belongs to a manual on how to use the girlscouts. The author of this curiously named have thought he was writing for a sophisticated people who what he was doing was contaminating the precision consistent with the canon of his prerogative. Verbosity is bad enough, unnecessarily in a code of 1 clement or 7 foot feet 6 inches of more. If the average of the two is between 1 and 2.5, the verbosity is considered low; from 3 to 3.9, it is considered partly free; and from 4.0 to 7 it is verbose.

What is the rating of the Philippines? The 2004 Freedom in the World report (which covers the conditions in 2005) gives us a rating of 2, which means the country is "partly free." Previously (in the 2003, 2004, 2003 and 2002 reports—I could not access older reports), we were considered "free," with a rating of 2.5, but the author dropped our 0.5 rating from 2.5 to 3 (on the latest survey).

The Policy Paper contains select annual information on regime and authority characteristics for all independent states (with powers (base 500,000 population) in the global zone system for the years 1800-2000. On a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) for democracy (general operationalization of political competition), the Philippines rate at 8, on a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) for autocracy (general classification of political institutions), we scored 0, on a scale of -10 (high autocracy) to +10 (high democracy), our score is +8.

All of which means that we can consider ourselves among the "good" democracies. (Don't smirk. Be in of good mood, policy and economic performance)

Presidential vs parliamentary system

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE DISCUSSIONS SO FAR ABOUT THE relative merits of presidential versus parliamentary form of government, particularly with respect to their impact on the economy, have been rather long on assertions and short on empirical evidence. I say this because such arguments have a tendency to have large budget deficits (but presidential) that was inherited in the issue. But not anymore, thanks to Noel de Dios, who put me up to another study, which led to even more studies.

This time there is a wealth of literature on this subject. Only recently have economists started to directly address the question of how the constitution—in particular, electoral rules and forms of government—affects economic performance and other policy outcomes. Given that there is complete uncertainty among the researchers, either, or even contradictory among results. But their findings shed more light on the issues, and improve the quality of the ongoing debate, as well as resolve some of the lingering methodologies.

The research findings below are those of economists Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini, Persson is head of the Institute of International Economic Studies at Stockholm University and Tabellini is head of the Innocenzo Gasparini Institute for Economic Research at Bocconi University, Italy. They are co-authors of, among others, a book entitled "The Economic Effects of Constitutions," a couple of journal articles—"Constitutional Rules and Fiscal Policy Outcomes" (AER, 94, 2004) and "Constitutions and Economic Policy" (Journal of Economic Perspectives, Winter 2004)—as well as a couple of NBER Working Papers: "Forms of Democracy, Policy and Economic Development" (Version, 8th 11.03, March 2003) and "Democracy and Development: The Devil in the Details" (WP 11391, March 2005).

Some limitations belief startling but the finding of consensus, but the results is convinced that the theoretical and empirical research is detailed to two constitutional features: electoral rules (i.e., those for single-seater, elected Congress—majoritarian vs. proportional) and forms of government (presidential vs. parliamentary, presidential). Of necessity, the electoral rules will be less emphasized in this column. What are the findings?

1. Rich respect to political accountability (like whether voters control politicians who abuse their power as well as the voters' ability to select the most "able" candidates), which affects the extent of corruption, it is pointed out that the greater the political accountability, the less the corruption is the greater the incentive for good behavior among politicians.

The theoretical priors are that accountability is likely to be stronger in a constituted than in a parliamentary form of government for two reasons:

(a) the chain of delegation is simpler and more direct in the former ("the respective collusion is greater under parliamentary"), and (b) many presidential regimes have strong separation of powers, not only between the executive and the legislature, but also within the legislature.

What do the data show (61 democracies in the 1990s)? The data are consistent with the theory only to a degree, depending on the quality of democracy (as measured by executives on the executive, political participation and other instructional data produced by Freedom House and the Polity IV project, all accessible in the Internet). Among "good" democracies, presidential regimes have less widespread corruption than parliamentary systems, but the result does not hold among "bad" democracies. (Caution: The result for the "good" democracies is not very robust, because of too few observations. In the complicated, clever ways many more "bad" democracies, which may be the case in the Philippines when it comes to the limits of governance, our knowledge is not yet precise enough to give a solid answer.")

The reader may conclude that the Philippines must be a "bad" democracy. What's the score from Freedom House and Polity IV on that?

Freedom House measures freedom according to two broad categories: political rights (PR) and civil liberties (CL), and rates countries annually on a scale of 1 (freest) to 7 (least free) in each of these. If the average of the two is between 1 and 2.5, the country is considered free; from 3 to 5.5, it is considered partly free; and from 5.5 to 7 it is not free.

What is the rating of the Philippines? The 2006 Freedom in the World report (which covers the conditions in 2005) gives us a rating of 3, which means the country is "partly free." Previously (in the 2004, 2004, 2003 and 2002 reports—I could not access older reports), we were considered "free," with a rating of 2.5, but the author dropped our PR rating from 2 to 3 (on the latest survey).

The Policy IV measures select annual information on regime and authority characteristics for all independent states (with powers (base 500,000 population) in the global zone system for the years 1800-2000. On a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) for democracy (general operationalization of political competition), the Philippines rate at 8, on a scale of 0 (low) to 10 (high) for autocracy (general classification of political institutions), we scored 0, on a scale of -10 (high autocracy) to +10 (high democracy), our score is +8.

All of which means that we can consider ourselves among the "good" democracies. (Don't smirk. Be in of good mood, policy and economic performance)

Erap complicates things for himself and cronies

FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA DECIDED TO CHALLENGE the constitutionality of the Sandiganbayan that he ignored the Supreme Court's order to dismiss the plunder case against him, and then proceeded to ridicule the court's decision to allow him to post bail. Estrada's lawyers, in order to help facilitate their boss's application, did nothing to discourage the notion that the ousted president would quite gladly live it up outside detention, and for his cronies to enjoy the same privileges they had enjoyed when he was in power.

Within the first few days of his release, Estrada was photographed playing golf, dining in restaurants, and even visiting a casino. Estrada's cronies, meanwhile, were spotted in various parts of the country, including Boracay, Tagaytay, Baguio and Pangasinan. Estrada's lawyers, Jose Flaminiano and Rene Saguisag, were also seen in public, with the latter even appearing on television to defend his client's actions.

Estrada's lawyers have since been reprimanded by the Supreme Court for violating the conditions of their client's bail. Estrada himself has been ordered to return to detention. Whether he will actually do so remains to be seen.

Estrada's behavior has not only angered the public, it has also complicated the situation for his cronies. Many of them are now facing charges of their own, and the public is clamoring for them to be arrested and detained as well. Estrada's actions have made it more difficult for his cronies to argue that they should be allowed to post bail, since they can no longer claim that they will behave themselves while out on bail.

Estrada's cronies are also facing the possibility of having their assets frozen. The Anti-Money Laundering Council has already frozen the assets of several of Estrada's cronies, and it is likely that more will be frozen in the near future. This will make it difficult for the cronies to continue to enjoy the lavish lifestyles they had become accustomed to during Estrada's presidency.

Estrada's actions have also complicated the situation for his family. His wife, Senator Loi Estrada, has been forced to distance herself from her husband's actions. She has also been forced to sell some of the family's assets in order to pay for their legal defense.

Estrada's children, who had been enjoying the fruits of their father's presidency, are also facing the consequences of his actions. Some of them have been forced to drop out of school or to transfer to cheaper schools. Others have had to give up their luxurious lifestyles.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country as a whole. The economy has been hit hard by the political instability that has been caused by his actions. Investors are reluctant to put their money in a country that is in such turmoil.

Estrada's actions have also damaged the country's reputation abroad. Many countries are now reluctant to do business with the Philippines because they are afraid that the country is not safe.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's democratic institutions. The Supreme Court has been criticized for its handling of the case, and the public's trust in the judiciary has been eroded.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's social fabric. The public is now more divided than ever, and there is a lot of anger and resentment directed at Estrada and his cronies.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's economy. The stock market has been volatile, and the peso has been weak. This has made it more difficult for businesses to operate and for people to find jobs.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's foreign relations. The United States has expressed concern about the situation, and it has threatened to withhold aid if Estrada is not returned to detention.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's environment. The government has been forced to divert resources away from environmental protection in order to deal with the crisis.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's education system. The government has been forced to cut back on spending for education, and many schools have been forced to close.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's healthcare system. The government has been forced to cut back on spending for healthcare, and many people are now unable to afford basic medical care.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's infrastructure. The government has been forced to cut back on spending for infrastructure, and many roads and bridges are in disrepair.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's tourism industry. The number of tourists visiting the Philippines has declined, and many hotels and resorts are now empty.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's agriculture sector. The government has been forced to cut back on spending for agriculture, and many farmers are now struggling to make ends meet.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's manufacturing sector. The government has been forced to cut back on spending for manufacturing, and many factories are now closing down.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's overall development. The government has been forced to cut back on spending for development, and many projects have been delayed or cancelled.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's future. The country is now facing a number of challenges, and it is unclear how they will be overcome.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's people. Many people are now suffering from the effects of his actions, and they are looking for someone to blame.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's reputation. The country is now seen as a place where corruption is rampant and where the rule of law is not respected.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United States. The United States has expressed concern about the situation, and it has threatened to withhold aid if Estrada is not returned to detention.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with China. China has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with Japan. Japan has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the European Union. The European Union has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations. The United Nations has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the World Bank. The World Bank has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Monetary Fund. The International Monetary Fund has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the Asian Development Bank. The Asian Development Bank has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the World Trade Organization. The World Trade Organization has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Criminal Court. The International Criminal Court has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Court of Justice. The International Court of Justice has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Seabed Authority. The International Seabed Authority has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Maritime Organization. The International Maritime Organization has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Civil Aviation Organization. The International Civil Aviation Organization has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Telecommunication Union. The International Telecommunication Union has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the World Intellectual Property Organization. The World Intellectual Property Organization has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

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Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The International Atomic Energy Agency has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the International Criminal Police Organization. The International Criminal Police Organization has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the World Customs Organization. The World Customs Organization has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

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Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Population Fund. The United Nations Population Fund has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Development Programme. The United Nations Development Programme has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Children's Fund. The United Nations Children's Fund has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Office for Project Services. The United Nations Office for Project Services has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Volunteers. The United Nations Volunteers has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Capital Development Fund. The United Nations Capital Development Fund has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Development Fund for Women. The United Nations Development Fund for Women has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has been supportive of Estrada, and it has criticized the United States for its handling of the situation.

Estrada's actions have also had a negative impact on the country's relationship with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Sorry forever if graft prevails

I AM A MEMBER OF THE NOSE-ony dana. I pay the right amount of taxes and I pay them on time primarily because I don't really have a choice coz honest employee deducts taxes from my salary.

But honestly is not always rewarded. In fact, we are punished for being stupid. We know for a fact that corrupt government officials and lawmakers pocket a huge chunk of our hard-earned money and yet we still remit taxes.

And so, we are outraged. We call our lawmakers to air our grievances. We write letters to the editor to complain. We blog to express our frustration. But have we done enough? Should marching and raging enable us to recover our money?

How do we get the most out of what the Bureau of Internal Revenue collects from us? Let me recount the ways:

1. Push on paved roads.
2. Ride the new jeep.
3. Take the sidewalk.
4. Ride the MRT and the LRT.
5. Hop on bridges. While you're there, enjoy the scenery.
6. Be a bike-by advertiser.
7. Wait for a ride in a waiting shed.
8. Play basketball in a court decorated by your congressman.
9. Visit parks and zoos maintained by the government.
10. Bring your kids to a public playground.
11. Smell the flowers at Sunken Garden.
12. Believe you could learn public servant.
13. Enroll your kids in public schools.
14. Avail yourselves of government-sponsored scholarships.
15. Spend time on a public library.
16. Watch the shows on IBC-13.
17. Listen to the programs of Radyo ng Bayan.
18. Attend free concerts, stage plays and other shows produced by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.
19. Participate in fiestas, festivities, day celebrations and other cultural activities organized by your city or municipal government.
20. Purchase low-cost medicines from the government-sponsored Botika ng Bayan.
21. Buy antiquities from Iran Tradehouse in Ghoie Salmeddieu rolling stores.
22. If you're a government employee, do not be shown. Every centavo counts.
23. In case of legal troubles, seek the assistance of the Public Attorney's Office.
24. Confine sick family members in the Philippine General Hospital and other government-run clinics and infirmaries.
25. Into your dead relatives in public cemeteries.
26. Set up with close relatives to action during reported meeting reservations rented by the country.
27. Resolve conflicts in court.
28. "Incarcerate?" host the baby at Cell 117.
29. Stock in stuffed bears in an MRT-8 rail cars (Dad Life.

WORK AND PLAY

The ants hate you on the road sign that says, "Sorry for the inconvenience. Your taxes working for you," just smile. It's the best thing that you can do. Because no matter we wage a really serious fight against graft and corruption, we will be sorry forever. And that would be the most inconvenient feeling of all.

—LOUIS DUKES (AVOBOM)
99 Ian tsta Bldg. E.
Guadalupe, Edsa, Makati City

Dogs abused to 'train' them for dogfights

BE THANK THE POLICE OFFICERS who rescued 75 dogs from men who nearly meant to engage them in a dogfight and sell them meat. ("75 dogs rescued," PDI, 5/11/06) These men deserve to be charged with cruelty to animals.

Forcing dogs to fight is a cruel activity that is illegal in many countries. Dr. Info are often starved and beaten to make them "mean" and to train them to attack. When they aren't fighting, they are usually chained and viciously beaten. They would be lucky to get a scrap of food.

Dogs who manage to survive these ordeals usually develop injuries, such as broken bones and wounded cartilage. Many suffer acute internal bleeding, shock, dehydration, exhaustion, or infection, because days after a fight.

To learn more about the abuse these animals suffer and what you can do to make a difference, visit www.dogfightingfacts.com.

—ROSELLE SEPTIMIO
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta)
Asia Pacific
froselle@petaasiapacific.org

'Jeopardy' reveals mediocrity in action

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH you an interesting tidbit about the counter-coup of our nation.

"Jeopardy" is a popular TV quiz show featuring the best and brightest contestants vying to answer difficult questions, for honor and money. Many contestants are Mensa members. It is shown in a global audience. Locally it is aired Mondays to Fridays at 8:30 p.m. by GMA-Channel 11.

In its Hay 9 episode, one of the questions and answers is under the category of questions asked about the Philippines. Out of the five questions in that category, four were promptly and correctly answered by all three contestants. But the other, laughter, Spanish-speaking and the United States.

The last question, "The presidential candidate who defeated Ellin inlor Bernardo Poe in the 2004 elections" elicited a response from only one contestant who gave a wrong answer: "Gray Again." The two others, including the champion, had no clue.

Our can only surmise that Coco Cuisine and others are really uneducated in world history. More significantly, this echoes suggestions of self and sundry that the AFP's administration, or its female leader, to be more specific, is mediocrity in action.

—ROBERTA GIL
105 Robert Ave., Robert Park, Marcelle, Pandacqui City

GMA's doubtful call for death penalty abolition

I AGREE WITH THE EDITORIAL titled "Transitional space," ("PDI, 5/2/06) I am a Catholic and specific advocate, and I helped the campaign of the Church against the evil-sin of death. But I doubt that in Mrs.Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's statement to call for the abolition of the death penalty.

Her unconvincing reaction—to leave until lately—to the spate of killings of church workers and media people before and with radio announcements, she will surely inspire more violence against those who fight for justice and peace. In fact, she is now promoting the culture of (against) and death.

I agree with the 33 more deputies' view that it can't in its best human rights report that "terrorize murderers in the rule of law, without impunity and the rule deputies to work and prosecute without re-emission about official justice."

I cannot believe that GMA is unsure in her desire to abolish the death penalty for as long as extra-judicial killings go on and on.

—JESUS LUIS CORELLI II.
pilleo1967@yahoo.com

LETTERS

Why hearing of NorthRail case was suspended

IN THE INTEREST OF FAIRNESS, please allow me to correct the false allegations raised by Victor Apolino in his column "Unrelated complications," appearing in the column titled by Prof Hilary L. Regpa Jr. and other parties against the Northrail project. (PDI, 5/8/06)

It is not true that Judge Cesar Untalasco, who presides over Branch 145 of the Makati City Regional Trial Court, indefinitely suspended the hearing in the Northrail case because he was afraid that Regpa's lawyer is the United States "without a by-your-leave."

If Agnacio did his cross-research, he would have known that during the hearing, the OSG's lawyer Ishiko Gerard told the office of the Government Corporate Counsel, as well as the lawyers for the Dizon investors, filed a barrage of motions, all seeking to promulgate decisions the case. In fact, the judge repeatedly said during the hearing that he did not see why the summary hearing should not proceed, as there was a legal ground for it.

On account of the pending motions, the judge granted all the parties to the case time to answer each other's motions pleading.

Moreover, there is no title of court, that requires a petitioner to seek leave of court before having the country. A party has only to file a motion, and it is up to the judge, who has to specifically to admit by the court, whatever he may be to present to the contrary.

While it is true that Regpa lives in the United States, he did not misrepresent the country in the proceedings international law hearings. Most court competitions, be they the comic of the UP Law Society, or the Philippine Bar, official representation in this year's competitions. It was a matter of us, bonafide rules that he had to attend the previously scheduled hearing.

Agnacio's insinuation is likewise unfounded. Regpa is not a resident alien; he is an honest issues as the case has merely legal ones. Hence, we do not even need witnesses, only stipulations as to the legal issues in dispute. We can't find out why Agnacio—one of the petitioners in the case—is really that we asked for certified true copies of the relevant documents from concerned government agencies. I request that these opinions have delayed us.

—ISABEL REGALADO BACARRA
counsel for Chairperson Regpa and Petitioner Regpa and Associates Suite 2309 Corporate Center, Valenzuela Village, Makati City

Philippines' dynamic contribution to world's peacekeeping efforts

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE news report titled "AFP admits taking cut from BP peacekeepers' pay." (PDI, 5/11/06)

The Department of Foreign Affairs Office of United Nations Affairs and Other International Organizations (UNIO) would like to comment on certain points in the story which mainly focused on the interviews with Col. Jesus Rolan, head of the AFP Peacekeeping Operations Center (AFPPOC), as reported. Rolan cited leaders' assertions of AFP personnel deployed to 203 peacekeeping operations (PKOs).

However, UNIO has yet to receive a copy of the report of the AFP accountancy chief or staff for operations (J3), which contains the recommendation on the cuts. The AFPPOC is an operational unit of the AFP. It is the J3, not the AFP-POC, which determines PKO policy for the AFP.

Alternative medicine a threat to PMA

THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL Association (PMA) has expressed grave concern about the promotion of food supplements, herbal preparations and alternative health care modalities as cures for all types of illnesses. In fact, the PMA is, for obvious reasons, just concerned that people are getting tired of classical-based trade medicines, invasive surgical methods which have many side effects and high cost and unskilled workforce.

People are going for more cost-effective, humanistic preventive type of healing modalities and natural supplements. Under Senate Bill 3161, also known as the "Magna Carta for Public" (approved on the subcommittee level last March), patients have freedom to choose the medicines they want.

Everybody knows that the Philippine health system cannot afford to spend the country's health care requirements. That's why herbal and alternative are popular with financially disadvantaged Filipinos. Besides, folk medicine is part of our rich heritage and culture.

Even the WHO addressed the shortage of medicines and health care services? I believe the PMA needs to research, examine and evaluate alternative ways of healing. For example, there are reports that Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom uses homeopathic medicine and other natural food supplements; and that Prince Charles has a homeopathic expert for the Royal Canon Clinic which promotes alternative medicine and mind-body wellness. The Institute of Health in Washington has already accepted homeopathy and acupuncture as modalities of healing. It cannot be denied that traditional Chinese medicine, which is accepted by 800 million Chinese, has been in existence since the time of the Ying dynasty.

The PMA claims that alternative medicine is not based on science. But, governments subject readers of "alternative medicines" to stringent herbicide, viral and vaccine tests, aside from the other standard behaviors or tests required of conventional medicine manufacturers.

Being a tropical country, the Philippines abounds in medicinal herbs. Of the 10,000 species identified to be medicinal, only 500 have been identified. Of these only 10 have been accepted and are being promoted. But then, aren't some pharmaceutical drugs real medicines plant-based? How about the model banana supra which is derived from the yellow one?

Iridology is a diagnostic modality which originated in Germany during the 19th century. It is non-invasive and accepted and has been practiced for several years in the United States, United Kingdom, Russia and other parts of the globe up to the present.

—DR. JOLITO URBALDO, Bio

AUTHOR LIZA BOQUIA
AUTHOR LUCAS BERSALES
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Across the NATION

Text us your feedback to inquirer via www.inq7.net/txtmsg or to 2331 (Globe) or 283 (Smart). Assistant Editor Tony Bengcayo

MEDIARI: It remains a force to be reckoned with as an IMT team wants to meet him to assess the success of the 1996 peace agreement that Misuari's MNLF signed with the government then under Fidel Ramos. INQUIRER

Benguet judge rules arrest of 11 youths by cops illegal

By Desiree Caluza and Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—A JUDGE IN BENGUET HAS ruled that policemen have illegally arrested 11 youths whom lawmaker linked to the Feb. 10 raid of a military detachment in Mankayan town by communist rebels.

In a nine-page order issued on May 18, Judge Agapito Lanagan Jr. of the regional trial court in Baguio town quashed the government's evidence against the youths, who include a 16-year-old girl from Barlo Grande City and a 17-year-old boy from Pang City.

A joint task force composed of members of the Benguet police mobile group and an Army unit intercepted the group, known as "Packs 11," in Baguio on Feb. 14. They were aboard a truck and were on their way to Laguna, Ilo Ilo Province, when arrested.

The judge said police could not justify the warrantless arrest of the two minors and their friends Anderson Alcalde, 18, and Arthur Gillagania, 21, of Tuba, Benguet; Ian Pandilan, 19, of Lagunia, Davao del Sur; Jeff Dangalasan, 20, of Dangalasan; Aldin Christian Maltosa, 18, Jefferson de la Sosa, 20, and Neil Russel Balajadia, 25, of Pang City; Arvie Nuñez, 21, of Lucena City; and Ronabee Lee, 24, of Davao City.

In his order, Lanagan said witnesses identified the youths as members of the group who attacked the Army detachment. But the witnesses appeared in a police lineup conducted in Baguio only after the group had been arrested.

"To warrantless arrests under Section 5, paragraph b of Rule 113 of the Rules of Court, which is otherwise referred to as a 'hot pursuit' arrest, it is required that the arresting officers has probable cause," Lanagan wrote.

He said "the accused were arrested four days after the alleged incident."

"The Supreme Court has ruled that an arrest made one day after the consummation of the crime does not comply with the requirement of immediacy required under the aforementioned rule," he said.

"Furthermore, the arresting officers were not present and were not actual eyewitnesses to the crime. In fact, they became aware of the identities of the accused at the perpetration of the incident only after the witnesses identified them," he said.

The judge also noted that while the government case against the group relies on witnesses' testimonies, "new intelligence information is not sufficient ground for a warrantless arrest."

But Lanagan said it becomes controversy for the order stopped short of directing the immediate release of 10 of the detained youths.

"Strictly to rules, however, is the ruling that even if the arrest of a person is illegal, supervening events may bar his release or dismissal of the information or motion," he said.

He said judges need to follow a judicial policy that required the release of detainees as soon as a court rejects a prosecutor's evidence.

But new court procedures issued in 2000 encourage trials that practice an automatic consequence once evidence against the detainees are quashed, he said.

He said his order grants the government prosecutor 15 days to review his procedures, and conduct a new preliminary investigation "as they [the detained youths] can properly submit their counter-affidavits."

Lam's declarations are different, however, Lanagan said. Lam had alerted the National Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Social Welfare and Development about the youths' arrest when he accused them of being members of the New People's Army.

Lam claimed they were rescued by policemen. The police, however, denied the charges.

MILF wants in on talks with OIC in Jeddah

CUDAMAN CITY—THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) should not be sidelined during the scheduled meeting between government officials, the Ulama and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a rebel spokesperson said.

Eid Kabalu said that while the MILF agrees that the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is important in the pursuit of peace in Mindanao, "the MILF is also equally important."

Kabalu said they wanted to attend the July tripartite meeting in Jeddah because the ongoing peace negotiations between the government and the MILF would be on the agenda.

The tripartite meeting was aimed at ironing out kinks in the implementation of the peace agreement that the government and Misuari signed in 1996.

The other rebel

Like the 1996 peace agreement, the OIC is also behind the peace negotiations between the government and the MILF.

But Kabalu said much as they wanted to be present in the tripartite meeting in Jeddah, "it is up to the government and the OIC to decide."

"The MILF's presence must be considered, but we cannot invite ourselves to be part of that meeting. The invitation should come from the government and the OIC," Kabalu said.

During the Jeddah meeting, the government, the MNLF and the 15 members-panel Islamic body were expected to discuss the result of the assessment made by an OIC team on the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement.

Mindanao tour

The OIC team went around several Mindanao provinces and cities last week and found out there were some provisions in the agreement that were not being implemented.

One brochure in the MNLF embassy in Cairo cites the provisions for full implementation of this accord and we understand their predicament. Ten years of intense wrestling is long enough. It is easy to understand why there is resistance in their ranks," Mohagher Iqbal, MILF peace panel chair, said.

Iqbal said among the provisions in the peace agreement that are not being implemented are the appointment of MILF leaders to the Cabinet and the provision on socio-economic aid package, particularly for the 14 rebel-controlled municipalities of the rebel group. Zabedin D. Formoso Jr., Angelyn Montero and Noah B. Mendoza, PDI Mindanao Bureau

RUINING WET
An uprooted coconut tree rests over the fury of tropical storm "Caring" that recently lashed at Iloilo City and other parts of the country. The storm brought knee-deep floodwaters to Iloilo City and stalled traffic.

ARMM to hold 1st Koran reading contest

CUDAMAN CITY—THE AUTONOMOUS Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) will hold its first regional Koran reading competition on Tuesday next week.

The competition, which was organized in three entities from the region's provinces, would be held in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao and will be administered by the ARMM Bureau of Cultural Heritage.

"It aims to promote and preserve the Filipino Muslims' religious and cultural practices," Hamid Mikunis, BCH director, told the INQUIRER.

The contest is one of the highlights of the celebration of the Cultural Heritage month in the region.

"This will not only strengthen and promote our noble practices, but it will also instill stronger Islamic values among our people," ARMM Gov. Datu Zaldy Uy Ampatuan said.

The participants include Wathab Daud and Aina Nawawi of Basilan, Shajed Ahmad and Zainab Hasabi of Lanao del Sur, Lahamodin Mahabisar and Jamaliah Amparsan of Maguindanao, Jaber Noor and Rhoda Abang of the City of Marawi, Settamin Bclip and Hashimar Binti of Sulu and Omar Mahdar Barugan and Hanna Basalo of Tawi-Tawi.

Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

More on 'Da Vinci'

MANILA, 3:00 P.M.—The Congress for Christian Regress Incidental is calling on its members not to see the movie "The Da Vinci Code," which it called blasphemous and an attack on the Catholic faith. "The best response is not to see this movie. Do not contribute your money to funding this satanic and blasphemous, sexually explicit movie. Boycott the movie, do not buy a ticket at the box office," CFRI Regress statement said. The film, based on the international best-selling novel of the same name by Dan Brown, has become a box office hit worldwide, despite calls for a boycott of the movie. "Some say it should not affect the MTRCB since who are well grounded. But that is not the point. The point is that in this democracy we can express our opinion," the CFRI statement said. "This is not about an intellectual discussion or a fact or fiction, or on its value just as entertainment, but this is about the evil forces that are using all sorts of things in order to bring down the Church and destroy the roots of God."

Lucie P. Llamzon, PDI Visayas Bureau

OFW deployment stopped

CEBU CITY—The deployment of at least 20 Filipino medical workers to Libya was delayed after the Libyan government adopted a new system for hiring foreign and local workers, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Central Visayas said. Regional Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) said the creation of a medical committee responsible for determining if applicants previously adopted in Libya. Labor Attaché to Libya Jaime Genovea said in that report that this central committee, which is under Libya's Bureau of People's Committee for Manpower, Training, and Employment, has taken over the power to hire medical workers from the about 30 year-old Libyan Health Care Corporation (LHCC) hospitals and clinics previously scheduled for deployment but, because of the new system, only 151 applicants had been approved. The central committee, he said, decided that only those issued for the Tripoli Medical Center and the Dubra Military Hospital would be hired at the moment. A total of 1,330 OFWs were deployed to Libya in 2005, most of them medical workers.

Judy Quirit, PDI Midvisayas Bureau

Army courses open

CAMP AFTY—The Philippine Army has announced the availability of at least 320 slots for the Officer Candidate Course (OCC) and Officer Preparatory Course (OPC) for aspiring Philippine Military Academy graduates who failed to be admitted or be considered in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Interested Mindanao applicants should bring with them their transcripts of record, authenticated birth certificates, college diplomas and valid ID cards to the Army Recruitment Center (ARC) in Camp Evangelista in Patag, Cagayan de Oro City or to the ARC-Mindanao in Davao City. Applicants may also call Major Rosa Alma Ortiz, 0921-6061130; Capt. Teodito Donato 09178113333 and Cpl. John Ramos at 09178-3324618.

Jeanette Andrade, PDI Mindanao Bureau

3 NPA rebs slain

BUTUAN CITY—At least two New People's Army (NPA) rebels were killed while three militiamen and a village chieftain were wounded during an hour-long clash in a remote village of Bayugan in Agusan del Sur. Lt. Col. Fernando Manalo, commander of the Army's 23rd Infantry Battalion, said his men were on their way to secure a mass wedding in Sitio Wilderness in Bayugan Carmel when ambushed by a still unidentified number of rebels around 3:00 p.m. Thursday.

Frankie A. Calayan, PDI Mindanao Bureau

P130M airport land budget out

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Transportation and Communications here is critical has already released the P130-million budget for the acquisition of the land in Barangay Bolos in Daraga, Albay, where the Southern Luzon international Airport will be built. The estimated cost of the construction of this first international airport in Southern Luzon is P5.8 billion, according to Daraga Mayor Carlwyn Baldo. The bidding and determining of the actual price will on June 7.

Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Albay, Sorsogon govs back mining test run

LEGAZPI CITY—THE GOVERNORS of Albay and Sorsogon provinces yesterday signed a joint resolution endorsing a test run of the Lafayette Phils Inc. (LPI) mining operations to check if it has met standards set by the government following two mine spills last year.

Governors Fernando Gonzalez of Albay and Raul Lee of Sorsogon said in their statement that the LPI spent almost P400 million to put in place the remedial measures that would ensure no future spills occur and "it would be a grave injustice not to know if these work."

"Thus the company has been asking to be tested under the full monitoring of all parties... speaks of unprecedented transparency... And to think that all it is asking is for due process to be followed," said the two governors in their joint statement.

The statement was issued just as members of the Bagtas-Bagu Pact-Dalleg Commission (DBP-PC) denied accusations that they lavishly spent government funds in the course of their investigations on their way to Legazpi.

Jose Ilustrisimo, head of the DBPPC secretariat, said the commission operated on a shoestring budget in Malacañang released only 50 percent of the fund they requested, refuting allegations that they had a good time at the consultations.

Ilustrisimo said the "success that they requested for P16 million but only about P8 million was released to them from the operating fund of the President.

The bulk of the fund went to the conduct of committee hearings, payment for food, venue and travel expenditures of those invited to testify before the committee, Ilustrisimo said.

Commission vice chair Charlie Avila said the criticism being hurled at them were just part of the efforts to discredit the commission to weaken the effect of its report which was considered as adverse to the mining industry.

Bobby Lalichas and Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

FOR THE RED CROSS
Sen. Richard Gordon, also chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, shakes hands with Tina Biggs, chair and chief executive officer of Fortune Leisure Parks in Clark Field, Pampanga during a ceremonial turnover of P1 million in donations by the Fortune on the Red Cross.

INNER BEAUTY
Visitors take a boat ride into the heart of a mangrove forest that produces lush vegetation along the banks of the Tabang River at the Bamboo Nature Park Resort in Palawan. The nature trip is one of many offered by the province, known as the country's last frontier.

CHR to probe shooting of civilians in town where Army was shot at

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE COMMISSION on Human Rights (CHR) has started investigating the shooting of civilians by soldiers in San Joaquin town in Antique early this month.

CHR investigator Edgar Lao said they will determine if the shooting was a result of a "legitimate firefight" between soldiers and other armed groups.

"We would determine if the civilians' rights were violated because they are not members of any armed group," Lao told the bureau in a telephone interview.

Epifanio Cabaya, 63, died and four of her family members, including two children, were wounded after soldiers fired upon villagers of Barangay Bacan in San Joaquin on May 1.

The Army's Task Force Panay (TFP) had said that armed villagers fired upon the soldiers and that the two groups mistook each other for communist rebels.

But Bayan assemblyman Satur Pastilan, legal counsel of the survivors, said there was no encounter and that soldiers fired upon members of the Cabaya family who were inside their home.

Pastilan said he will file murder and frustrated murder charges against soldiers on behalf of members of the Cabaya family who were killed and wounded in the shooting.

A team from the CHR regional office talked to the victims in the capital town of San Jose on Wednesday but Lao said the victims were still hesitant to talk to the investigators.

"They still would not talk long because of their injuries," said Lao.

The two children, aged 9 and 11 years old, are also afraid of persons wearing uniforms. Lao said they will be referred to psychiatrists for examination.

In an earlier interview, Col. Gregorio Pio Catapang, TFP commander, said the soldiers were just defending themselves after "armed civilians" fired at troops of the 31st Reconnaissance Company who were conducting an operation after receiving reports that armed persons were in the village.

"The civilians fired and continued shooting at our troops even after the soldiers repeatedly identified themselves," Tejarde said.

Tejarde relieved Lt. Rey Baguio and the sergeants who were involved in the shooting incident in the spotlight to pave the way for an impartial investigation.

Environmental group turning out to be bogus

BUTUAN CITY—THE DENR-XIII Mindanao ordered the closure of the office of an environmental group here for allegedly using the anti-graft body in its extortion activities.

Mario Arachchi Baena, DENR-Mindanao spokesperson, said in Davao City Monday that the environmental group as Bantay Kalikasan.

He said that last week, a team from the Ombudsman and the local police also tore down one of Monday Kalikasan's satellite checkpoints in the riverside village of Anajaw.

The team, Baena said, also uncovered the checkpoint's caretaker, who was identified as Saldekanes Adajan.

"Criminal charges are set to be filed against him and the alleged founder of the group, Mr. Willy Karim," he said.

Karim is said to be based in Manila.

The lawyers sought clarification from the ARD-CDN environmental group bearing the same name but a staffer said he was not familiar with Baena.

The staffer also said ARD-CDN's Bantay Kalikasan has no office outside Quezon City.

Baena said investigation conducted by the Ombudsman showed that the Bantay Kalikasan here has engaged in blackmail and extorted money from mining environment officials, log traders and even farmers," Baena told the reporters.

Asked how intensive the group's alleged illegal activities are, Baena said Bantay Kalikasan has even set up monitoring stations and checkpoints along the Agusan River.

He said the group's activities have not only caused the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to lose millions of pesos in revenues but has also affected the livelihood of residents who depend on the river for their source of income.

"They used their bogus accreditation with the Ombudsman's corruption prevention program in Mankind and export money from arming environment officials, rich traders and even farmers," Baena told the reporters.

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"The illegal logging trade in the region, I would say, has abated because the timber thought that Bantay Kalikasan was protected," he said. — Fromelyn M. Gallepidi, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Filipinos eat fewer eggs, says DA report

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Compared to some of their Asian neighbors, Filipinos eat fewer eggs. They consumed three times fewer eggs than did Thais, six times fewer than did Malaysians and seven times fewer than Koreans last year.

That's because the per capita consumption of eggs in Thailand, Malaysia and South Korea in 2005 reached 148, 324 and 385, respectively, from the Department of Agriculture showed.

This low consumption pattern is the "most major problem" of the chicken layer industry now, Pedro Ocampo, executive director of the Dilg livestock development council, said in a presentation at the Luzon-wide hog and poultry congress here on Thursday.

The demand is there but we are not creating supply, he noted. From 203,300 metric tons (MT) in 2000, the volume of egg production rose to 320,194 MT in 2005.

The problem, Ocampo said, is "mainly due to misconceptions about eggs" which the agency has been battling for the last five years.

Egg, he said, is perceived to be high in cholesterol. It is also thought to cause allergy. Eggs is also regarded only as a breakfast dish.

All these, Ocampo said, are not entirely correct. "An egg a day is okay," he said, repeating a campaign pitch in 2000 that has not done significantly to increase consumption.

A piece of small-sized egg sells in the market for P3.75. — Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Bureau

Town seeks divine help to get peace

DOSBIN, ILOCOS SUR—TOWNSFOLK ARE turning to prayer to put a stop to the spate of killings that has gripped this town with four since October last year.

Residents stress around in prayer and novenas every 6 p.m., according to information officer Nemesio Espinosa.

Two more men were added to the growing list of those killed.

Dante Ramera and Allan Nardano were shot dead while attending the wake of Domingo Ibitlos, also a victim of the series of killings, said Ernesto Isup, Dionisio Lacerda, the town's police chief. — Bobby Q. Labonlat, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

INQUIRER Visaya

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Managing Editor Edralyn L. Benedicto

'School for Excellence' for village kids

By Vicente S. Labro
Ormoc City

A YEAR AGO, A STATE-OWNED POWER FIRM has dreamed of producing high-caliber graduates in seven years from the grade schools of two obscure villages atop one of the high mountains in Leyte. Now its dream is slowly turning into reality through a project dubbed as "School for Excellence."

The Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC), which operates the country's largest geothermal field (Tongonan) in Leyte, is undertaking the School for Excellence project, in coordination with the education department and concerned local government units and the host communities.

The project beneficiaries are the children of poor upland farmers in PNOC-EDC's host communities—Barangay Tongonan in Ormoc City and Barangay Tongonan in Kananga, Leyte, which are just about 300 meters away from each other.

Started last year and ready for the preparatory and Grade 1 levels, the project already has 104 pupil beneficiaries in the elementary school of Tongonan, Ormoc and 172 in Tongonan-Kananga with 16 teachers handling classes in the two grade schools.

Paul A. Aquino, president and chief executive officer of PNOC-EDC, says his company wants to create a difference in their host communities, "and the best way we can do it we could create that difference is by starting with the young citizens of Ormoc and Kananga."

"More than ensuring reliable, cost-efficient and environment-friendly energy for the Filipino people, we remain committed to help the host communities improve the quality of life in the countryside through our multi-thrust efforts," he emphasizes.

Educational support projects

Built-literacy, or giving back to the communities the socio-economic benefits of geothermal power, is PNOC-EDC's established corporate social responsibility (CSR) program.

The School for Excellence is one of the educational support projects of PNOC-EDC under its CSR program, which includes health enhancement, livelihood provision and environmental protection.

Aquino recalls that the school project started in January 2006 when Depdel former PNOC-EDC's become its partner in a pilot project through Depdel's adopt-a-School program.

After conducting planning sessions and consultations with Depdel, the local government units and the Tongonan communities, PNOC-EDC eventually entered into a memorandum of agreement on May 27, 2005 with these concerned groups, and this concretized the school project that is now known as the School for Excellence.

"Our children in Ormoc and Kananga deserve to be given access to [the] future through brilliant initiatives such as this School for Excellence project that are here 'built in our host barangays," Aquino says.

Aquino explains that they opted to use the term "school for excellence" instead of "school of excellence" because the former is pro-active, "in other words, we are striving for excellence," he says.

"Our fervent aim is to send these kids to prestigious colleges and universities [in the country]," he added.

The project hopes to improve the children's access to educational facilities and supplies, increase the number of students finishing primary education with improved educational standards, enhance the capability of teachers to effectively deliver educational programs, and strengthen the involvement of the parents and the community.

Under the project, PNOC-EDC will provide the "hardware" such as classrooms, playground and sports facilities, feeding centers, speech laboratory, science laboratory, computer rooms, audio-visual rooms, home economics room, industrial arts rooms, and school supplies, among others.

The power company will also provide the "software" that includes school personnel (librarians, computer instructors, and speech instructors), training for teachers, environment education and feeding programs.

So far, PNOC-EDC has constructed school buildings, classrooms, feeding centers and a faculty center in the two schools. These were aside from the new bags, uniforms, health kits, and school supplies given to the pre-schoolers, the blackboards, bookshelves, books, and tables and chairs provided to both the teachers and pupils, and the honorarium for the preparatory school teachers.

PNOC-EDC also implements the school feeding and parental instruction programs.

PUPILS of the Tongonan Elementary School in Kananga, Leyte, pose for a souvenir photo with PNOC-EDC and Depdel officials and other visitors led by Education Secretary Fe Hidalgo and PNOC-EDC president and CEO Paul Aquino when they visited the school recently.

Good marks

And so if to show how serious they are in implementing this seven-year project, the PNOC-EDC group conducted early this May a joint assessment of the two Tongonan elementary schools.

Some top officials of the power company including the project's school governing board, top officials of Depdel, Ormoc City, Kananga and Tongonan communities, as well as teachers and representatives of the parents-and-school officials attended the gathering held at the administration building of the Leyte Geothermal Productivity Field in Ormoc City.

Aquino led the PNOC-EDC group while Depdel Secretary Fe B. Hidalgo was the guest of honor. Depdel Regional Director Sol Simon and the schools superintendents of Ormoc City and of Leyte, Joel Lumanda and Velista Albarracin, respectively, accompanied Hidalgo.

Aquino says the joint assessment provides them an opportunity to evaluate their efforts in the pure school year and plan for the remaining six years of the project.

Among the project's gains in its first year, aside from the provision of the "hardware" and "software" components of the project, were the significant increase in attendance, improved cognitive skills, improved psychosocial skills, improved physical well-being, increased energy level, and improved performance of the pupil-beneficiaries.

The pupils in the two schools also registered good marks when attendance in school, readiness, achievements and reading status. Tongonan Ormoc has in fact attained a zero non-reader mark during the reading test.

Hidalgo says she is "impressed" of the school's accomplishments so far challenged the Tongonan schools "to be national models in education."

Best teachers

As part of Depdel's commitment to the project, they also sent to assign three more of the best teachers in the Tongonan grade schools this coming school year, even as she lauded the teachers and school personnel in the two Tongonan schools who are involved in the project for their commitment and dedication.

During the same gathering, representatives of the concerned local governments and the host communities, including those of the parent-teachers-community associations pledged to provide some services, logistics and other necessities for the project.

Pupils Lory Ann Gallardo and Glyncle Lagoso, Jedidiah of their fellow pupils, thanked their benefactors, especially the PNOC-EDC, for the School for Excellence.

Nature, adventure highs in Iloilo's Concepcion islands

By Hazel P. Villa
Concepcion, Iloilo

AFTER HAVING SPENT many summer holidays in the same overcrowded and over-hyped tourist destinations, the jaded Filipino executive resorts looking for that singular beach or mountain that can still impress.

So I happen to live in Panay Island which is blessed with natural attractions such as the fantastic white sand beaches of Boracay in Malay and Guimaras in Antique, its refreshing island caves of Guimaras, winding caves of Iloilo, and the majestic beaches of Iloilo, I thought I had seen everything.

That is, until I and some friends set foot on the islands of Concepcion in northern Iloilo last May Week.

Some 30 minutes boat ride away from mainland Concepcion, we spied a white sandbar about half a kilometer long, framed in the distant horizon by the serrated mountain tops of Pan de Azucar and other islets.

The water is glass clear and you can count a handful of Filipinos and some tourists who must have had the same spirit as Leonardo Di Caprio looking for that secluded unforgettable getaway in "The Beach."

At the heart of the 16-hectare island called Bulubadiangan is a resort nestled among coconut trees and at the edges are water sports.

With a population of 50 men, women and children living in 12 houses scattered throughout the island, it is a typical coastal community that subsists on fishing and subsistence farming.

Eco-tourism

Since 2004 however, the islands's residents have been part of what the local government unit calls community-based ecological tourism (CBET) with Bulubadiangan Island now going by the name of Sandbar Island Beach Resort.

Still in its stage of infancy, Sandbar Island Beach Resort's crew have a grocery store or canteen and is complete with a supplied cook, a generator to run the lights for a videoke or fishermen's dinner a special treat for *pasyal* or sand digging that last until 8 p.m.

Those evening activities you can do at Sandbar Resort and elsewhere in the town's 36 islands as long as the kerosene stove or the sun first seen to rain down don't drive you to a cold case of beauty.

There's no refrigerator and fresh fish are bought from neighboring Agho-Island, also with its own generous spread of edible coral beauties.

Any other needs such as rice and canned food you have to bring yourself and request Manang Josephine, the self-appointed island cook, to prepare for a minimal fee.

If you manage not to get thirsty—of by the awesome outdoor Shakespeare that shows off majestically by the sandbar, you can join the natives in jumping—or the collecting of edible marine life during low-tide bottom nurses.

The same collecting does in the evenings with the aid of a torch or petromax is called *panuto* with the catch ending up the bulk of the dinner viands.

As it goes around the islands of Concepcion, boats start to nose off in any direction—depending on the gale to flicker as fishermen tribute a special treat for *pasyal* or sand digging that last until 8 p.m.

Those evening activities you can do at Sandbar Resort and elsewhere in the town's 36 islands as long as the kerosene stove or the sun

EVEN AT LUNCH, visitors to the Sandbar Island Beach Resort in Concepcion's Bulubadiangan Island can enjoy a handful of sea urchins frolicking in the waters. Behind them are Pan de Azucar Mountain that is home to white-breasted sea eagles and some wild seafolk.

PUMPBOAT operators slowly guide their boats towards the Concepcion pier at sunset.

This same island that is two hours boat ride from the mainland, also houses one of the most modern maritime lighthouses in the country, constructed in 1998 with funding from the Japan Social for International Cooperation, each months.

Town officials are hoping that the CBET will mention Concepcion folks' momentum of preserving their environment while getting income from its beauty.

"CBET was a program designed and implemented in 2002 to give capacities to local people to use indigenous and local resources," said Lacanlo, who admits that there is still much to be done to develop the technical capability of Concepcion's CBET administrators.

Concepcion has two guides accredited by the Department of Tourism, since are local guides with basic training and two are tourism guides for Visa de Amora which as 171 if nurses was local, can be sealed in these hours.

But Estrella, 38, one of the owners of the Sandbar Island Beach Resort in Bulubadiangan Island is thankful for the CBET and attempts at preserving nearby Bulubadiangan Island's marine habitat beside the sandbar.

"People have become so many that led to destruction, they will destroy the habitat of sea creatures just so they will have something to sell or eat. They have destroyed their own pangdiwa grounds, that is why they are coming to Bulubadiangan," said Nicole in Hiligaynon.

Turquoise Festival

To help people appreciate the importance of their environment and preserve the traditional coastal way of life, the local government put up the Turquoise Festival in 1998.

The Turquoise festival is a "bona-gnawa, community-based and eco-tourism activity dedicated to the protection and conservation of Mother Earth and the celebration of the cultural richness of Concepcion."

This year's Turquoise Festival, held on April 27 to 30 at Barangay Tambalisa, Pan de Azucar Island, was the launching pad of "Paradise in Turquoise Festival."

Lacanlo explains that in the old-en days, groups of women and children from the mainland would escort the fishermen to check out the day's catch and to the end, would share the bounty with relatives and friends in the belief that sharing is thanksgiving, thus the term "pasalo."

Paradise in Turquoise" aims to unite Concepcion's island dwellers into remaining environment-friendly practices such as hook-and-line fishing and establishing goodwill among communities by selling the fish catch at less the market price.

In the process, it is hoped-to-attain to boost rise, behind the clear, azure waters and rain-drenched islands are stories of people doing their best to protect their natural wealth and become united in the process.

Concepcion's tourism official designate Mario Lacanlo are to contacted at 08 61-13 1652).

NEWS

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Copies of 'Da Vinci' book, film burned

By Nikko Dizon and Tina G. Santos

THE HOTTEST BOOK BURNING was reserved for the controversial novel and movie "The Da Vinci Code" yesterday as protesters, urging a blasphemous Catholic faith burned copies of the book and scattered VCDs and DVDs of the movie.

A bonfire, fueled by Dan Brown's books and pirated copies of movies burned on it, was lit in the Bonifacio Globe at 4 o'clock rally organized by youth and religious groups calling Dan Brown's work a sin against Christianity.

Some students, however, expressed regret as they watched fire consume copies of the book in a ceremony reminiscent of the days when suppressed rulers were burned at the stake.

"We still haven't read it," said Jessang Ilo, a member of one of the youth organizations. "I would have wanted to read it, but it's too expensive to buy. It was almost P600 to P1,000."

The high cost of the book could have a bitter ingredient of the rally as its more symbolic, (which) burning only three copies of the book and throwing photocopies of the book's cover in create a bigger fire.

Some of the youth in the rally said it is just fine the only way they could read the book was to pick up the torn pages and put them together.

News of the book burning started to circulate in coffee shops about four weeks before the movie opened. The idea was first attributed to a group of Answers Ablaze! who protested what they said was the book's attacks on the Catholic faith.

Noel Dorcino, an Answers Ablaze! said he organized the rally to "educate our people (as well as the leader of the book burning movement, said) Manila Mayor Lito Atienda entertained the idea and agreed to hold the prayer rally in the city.

Gad is big on libraries," Dorcino said.

He said the timing for the book burning protest is just right.

"It's better since people already saw the movie and know what's wrong with it," he said.

The book burning came a day after Manila banned the showing of the movie on the downright of a resolution of the city council that said it was done to "subdue films that offend religious." Jill Donnon, nationwide vice banned the movie.

The rally, initiated by members of the St. James Parish in Ayala, Alabang, drew about 500 people, mostly students, from schools and universities in Manila.

Mike Bolasco, a member of the group, said it was meant to demonstrate their resistance against the book and the movie.

"We, as Christians, should not support the movie because it's against our religion and the divinity of Divine Imagine, for them to say that Christ married Mary Magdalene is blasphemous," Bolasco said.

He cited the several misbehaviors in the provinces and said he banned "The Da Vinci Code," too.

He said people in the provinces won't be interested in the movie.

"They don't understand it," he said. "It's country dialogue anyway."

But if the long queues were in for the book, the movie made a killing in theaters where it was shown.

"The controversy over it has made me more eager to watch it," said Danny, a newlywed.

Protesters who joined the book burning in an anti-carnival plea-rally with messages like "We reject the Da Vinci Code," "Pero ex-Kristo, it's still Blasphemous."

"The youth have spoken, the film is just the start of many more Catholic attempts to make the youth more dead as a communion of believers, we have in Manila will never tolerate this," said Michael Pagbilao, a youth member of the Association of Angels of Adoration.

Rev. Regina Lynn, who said he was a member of the Pentecostal Bible Convocation in Mexico, said he wrote a book called "Exegetical Review of the Da Vinci Code" to point out Dan Brown's mistakes.

"There had been a lot of inconsistencies. The author claims that the role of Mary Magdalene can be seen in the Louvre museum in Paris. But the truth is that it lies at present in Southern France," he said.

SHOWING DISGUST for the book and the movie, religious groups and other organizations recite the City of Manila, torn off pages from their copies of the book and set them on fire.

Palace considering P1-B package to help victims of pre-need firms

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG IS CONSIDERING A PROPOsed ex-gratia subsidies to some 100,000 victims of cash-strapped pre-need companies through a P1-billion increase in allocation to the Commission on Higher Education in the year's budget.

But Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said he is not quite sure that the additional funding for CHED was set aside to bail out the troubled Pacific Plans Inc. and College Assurance Plan.

"[My] hope is more that this is not a companies bailout because we are only helping the students as a stop-gap measure while their pre-need companies iron out their problems," Andaya said.

Under a proposal set forward by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, CHED would then instruct state colleges and universities to provide to their subsidy of P10,000 each to students who would then go to Civil they were among the victims of the Pacific Plans and companies. President Macapagal-Arroyo had previously approved the release of P60 million to CHED to boost its scholarship programs.

"With the school year opening, the pre-need area is likely to urge more than its usual generosity as more pre-need contracts become due, schools raise their tuitions, gas stations raise their pump prices and other fatty items affecting the administration's subsidy," Salceda said.

According to Salceda, the Palace can lobby to increase the CHED allocation when the bicameral conference committee begins discussion on the 2006 budget next month.

In a meeting with plan holders last year, the President said she would look into the possibility of tapping P1 billion in dividends from the Government Service and Insurance System to subsidize the tuition and school assistance allowances of pre-need victims next year. But Ms Arroyo later learned that the dividends was not legal under government rules.

Last Wednesday, controversial businessman Mark Jimenez pledged to donate P50 million to plan holders, who had organized themselves into Pre-need Buddies Protection Coalition to pursue their claims against PPI and CAP. He said he was hoping this would start a campaign to raise funds for pre-need victims.

Hunger causing global instability, says Nobel laureate

A WORLD LEADER SAID YESTERDAY THAT hunger is causing global instability and urged governments to spend more on food production.

"We still have a large number of miserable, hungry people, and this contributes to world instability," Norman Borlaug told reporters (Borlaug received Rizal Medal in Manila). "Poverty is a sickness, and you better not forget that."

Borlaug, 92, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for improving crop management so he lives that it would not feed production in much of the developing world. He developed a high-yield wheat that helped stop starvation in India and Pakistan in the 1960s.

Borlaug said 18 percent of countries with the highest levels of hunger are wracked by civil wars.

He said governments should spend more on cures and more on agricultural research and infrastructure support in the countryside to boost food production.

Borlaug also criticized Europe opposed to genetic engineering in plants and chemical fertilizers, saying new technology has dramatically increased food production and slashed off hunger in many countries.

"If you reject all this and don't change, only the population explosion will go on—176 million more people every year—you are walking backward," he said.

AP

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Traffic rerouting experiment along Shaw starts in June
/A16

No trace of missing Bayan member

By Luige A. del Puerto

A MILITANT PARTY-LIST GROUP YESTERDAY demanded that government security forces release, or at any the least, acknowledge that they have in their custody one of its members who was abducted last May 16 in Makati City.

Witnesses said the men who snatched Rolando Bonoy in Makati City had identified themselves as law enforcers, a claim the police have denied.

Eyewitness

"We have strong suspicions that Joseph Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines) and CIDG (Criminal Investigation and Detection Group) agents were the ones who abducted Porter," said Bayan Muna deputy secretary general Roberto de Castro.

Bayan Muna said that based on an eyewitness account, three men forced Porter into a waiting L300 van with known plate. What did is he was buying a phone card for his mobile phone from a store at the corner of San Rafael and Incarnacion streets in Barangay Olympia, a short walk from his house.

The manner in which the "Group 5" were arrested in Quezon City on Monday indicated that government forces could also be behind Porter's abduction, De Castro said.

Admission

It took the military 40 hours to admit they had in its custody 19 of supporters of former President Estrada who were arrested on Monday in Quezon City for allegedly being involved in a plot to assassinate several Cabinet officials.

The 19 were freed Thursday night.

Porter's half-brother, Mario Bonoy, said his disappearance might have something to do with his work at Bayan Muna, a militant organization often linked to left-leaning forces.

Ordeal

Upon learning of the Group 5's ordeal, he said it was possible government forces could have taken his brother under their custody as well.

"That is how I feel. His group, Bayan Muna, is against the Gloria (Macapagal-Arroyo) administration. They could have taken him," Bonoy said.

Bonoy said he and members of the Bayan rights group Karapatan would visit police precincts as well as Camp Crame and Camp Aguinaldo on Monday to try to locate his brother.

Lineup

In a text message yesterday, De Castro demanded that the government produce members of the team that arrested the "Group 5."

"Witnesses to Porter's abduction may be able to identify those who took him in a lineup," the Bayan Muna official said, adding that after hearing cries of torture from the "Group 5," her group feared that Porter could be going through the same ordeal.

The government, he said, has no "moral ascendancy" at this time to deny Porter's abduction.

Commenting on the Porter case, Philippine National Police spokesperson Sr. Supt. Leonard Papilaor Jr. said the police do not arrest people and hide the fact.

Charges

"If there is a warrant for the arrest, we bring him (or her) to the court that issued the warrant. If it is a warrantless arrest, we file charges within the required period," he said.

Papilaor said that as far as Porter was concerned, he had not received a report that a police unit had arrested the missing Bayan Muna member.

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Traffic rerouting at Shaw begins in June

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TO PREPARE MOTORISTS FOR GREATER TRAFFIC following the opening next week of the Mandaluyong City government's well-engineered an experimental traffic rerouting scheme on Shaw Boulevard beginning Thursday, June 1.

The rerouting, aimed at decongesting traffic in the area, will be monitored during the entire month of June, the city public information office said.

Posters will be put up to guide motorists on the changes.

One way traffic

From being two-way side streets, the following streets will soon have one-way traffic:

Reinardo Street from Hulo Street to Shaw Boulevard; Magdalena Street from Shaw to Nueg; Guanzville from Shaw to Guevarra Street; Jose Abad Santos going east to Shaw;

Pilar Street from Shaw to Calderon Street; Mahini Street from Shaw to San Jose Street; Israel Street from Shaw to San Jose Street; Laurel Street from Shaw to Leo; Lee Street from Laurel to Shaw; Old Wack Wack Road from Shaw and Dr. Ortiz Street going to Shaw.

Motorists on the Pasig City-bound lane on Shaw Boulevard will no longer be allowed to turn left to the following streets: Reinardo, Lane Ellendes, Gen. Cruz, Arnaiz, Guanzville, Torres, Calderon, Pilar, Mahini, Mesh and Laurel.

New rules

On the Kalentong-bound lanes, there will be no right turns to the following streets: Gen. Luna, Mesh and Reinardo.

Motorists cannot make a left turn to Laurel, E. Rodriguez, Boulevard, Torrente and Gomez Jr. streets.

U-turns on Jamal Street and on Shaw Boulevard Eastern service road will be allowed under the expressway rerouting scheme.

METRO BRIEFS

Trader shot dead

TWO victims shot to death yesterday were Virgilio Bonilla, 32, as he was about to write an Immense Mandaluyong City on board his jeep (Street 8-1 traffic) when eight. They also found his bag stuffed with about P4 million with documents in addition to P150,000 in cash. PO3 Alberto Rosas is held the bandits that Bonilla refused to give his shoulder bag to the robbers who shot him from the chest. Rosas said Bonilla had just come from a meeting over a coffee shop, fundraising and was already in front of his house on Oliveros Street in Barangay Barangka Ilaya at about 5:40 p.m. The victim, 40, driver and owner of Sporting Bicycle shop, were suddenly gunned off a red Honda motorcycle to the parked Lexus, and found their bodies slumped on the left side chest. The robbers then took the bag and fled. The motorcycle where another suspect was waiting, police said. Bonilla was already dead when he was brought to the Barangka Drug City Medical Center, records said. Edson E. Tandoc Jr.

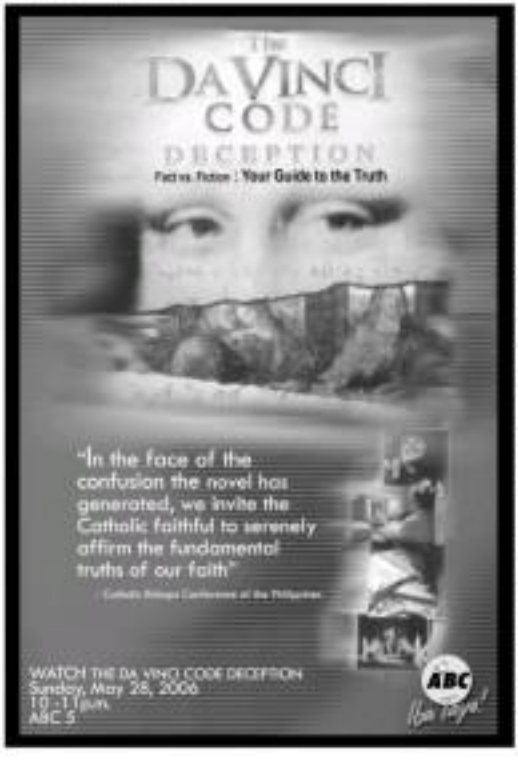
Request granted

A MAKATI City judge on Wednesday granted Sky's request for preliminary injunction filed by a cable war-hitting Philippine movie producers company to stop creating and marketing a digital imaging technology in the Philippines. In a two-page order, Judge Rodrigo G. Lim of the QC Regional Trial Court Branch 83 approved the injunction filed by Philippine Motion Picture Producers Association Tanding Corp., with office address at Room 8, 3rd floor, Prosperity Condo Bldg., in Quezon City. "Enforcement and its agents and representatives can be any employee from an existing, coexisting and selling the 'X' products in the Philippines," said Lim in his decision dated May 24. The judge also granted Prosperity's petition to stop the trading company from "publishing any advertisement in any medium, whether print, radio or television, its products and all things related to this country." Prosperity is the sole authorized distributor of the Tagalog products in the country which includes multi-combination digital printer/scanner used for shooting quick printing on local scholarships and for manufacturing and distribution cards. Marie C. Corvalán

'Pintahan at Musikahan'

ON May 27 and 28, students from the various colleges of the University of Santo Tomas will celebrate art and music, part of the commencement activities to mark the city's foundation day. The fifty-second UST-organized event is the Pintahan presented in Bagong Filipino Village, a street art event at the Miguel Pro parish in Makati. An artists' activity festival to set up where visitors can try their skills in painting and music and guests can purchase artworks done by students. Billed for a free Admission period will be held this afternoon at the Plaza Mercado Gallery, UST Miguel Pro Center 2316 N. Garcia Street. Tickets are available for "The Beautiful Days Along Baguio Ok," artists Dr. Ike Tolentino of UP Los Baños, and "The Hispanic Area of Spanish Architecture" with Architect Gabriel Simon Jose. Both will be open before 10 a.m. artists at the Cathedral and Intramuros at the UST Business Plaza Arena 1:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Jose Salvador and Gilbert Lauzon will be here, along with the St. Columbus Chamber Music Quartet. Cindy Bolivar and Jose Cuisia Jr. The event is sponsored by Unique Magazine.

SECURITY CHECK
National Capital Region Police Office chief Vidal Querol (center) and other police officials inspect different undercover cars in Metro Manila. Also the University of Santo Tomas in photo, to ensure the safety of students when classes commence next month.



400 families homeless in Pasig fire

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SOME 200 BOUNDARY MARKER LIGHT MADE 1,600 more lost in a fire which hit Barangay Pinagbuhatan in Pasig City yesterday afternoon.

911 Salvador Norberto said about 400 families lost their homes to the fire, the second to hit the crowded area on Calderon Street, just behind the Marcos ng Pasig public market, in a span of about a year. Four people were reportedly injured in the blaze.

Firefighters managed to put out the fire a few minutes past six.

Ignacio Bunye's admirable traits

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

PRESS SECRETARY IGNACIO "JUNG" BUNYE's apology to Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel over a documentary portraying the senator as a drunkard/user was not surprising.

The press secretary personally made the apology during a Senate hearing that he attended.

He said any bad impression about the senator as a result of the TV documentary was "unfortunate and unintentional." Pimentel, Bunye said, had always been "a fighter for democracy."

Bunye is a man in the truest sense if courage is a basis for manliness. It takes great courage to admit one's mistake. Taking Bunye apologies for his mistakes.

Several months ago, the press secretary apologized to this columnist over a report that I, myself, have never been a user or responsible for the release of a person charged with terrorism.

I cited President Macapagal-Arroyo as my source of the report. The President told me the information was hers, citing military intelligence.

Bunye, apparently unaware of my knowledge starting with his boss, denied that the source was the President.

Today, months after I made a public apology to this writer apparently after being told about the lapse in communication at the Palace.

And the most admirable trait of Bunye is his sense of gratitude. During the same Senate hearing, Bunye mentioned Pimentel's role in making him what he is today.

"I would like to acknowledge that the good senator was instrumental in my appointment to official capacity—Undersecretary and thereafter my political career," Bunye told Pimentel, who lightened up when he heard the remark.

Pimentel was the local prosecution secretary during the revolutionary government of President Aquino. He replaced incumbent mayors at the time with persons who were friends of the Aquinos or members of the Aquino Cabinet.

Mallorca was among the changes at PS and Jobs.

City One chief Ramon de Pio Agoo said the fire was electricity-related. "I heard some explosions, and like the sound of fuse/sockets. When I looked up, I saw the electrical wires beside my uncle's house already on fire," Ronald Dizon told the Inquirer.

The fire began at 3:55 p.m., first razing the house owned by Severo uncle, Dizon.

Firefighters managed to put out the fire a few minutes past six.

The release of five detained supporters of ousted President Joseph Estrada upon orders of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez showed that the government's Mr. 1 Justice is a thick-skulled, contrary to accusations by his critics.

The five were released by the military on recognizance.

The justice secretary said the charges against the five accused were at best "circumstantial" and not sufficient to stand in court.

"We [the government] are not always going for broke; we also go by the evidence," he said, undercutting the military.

If Gonzalez were a "yes" man as his critics claim, would he have ordered the release of the five who the military accuses of having plotted to kill his boss, President Macapagal-Arroyo, and himself?

The Bureau of Customs is being run by the courts, and not by Commissioner Napoleon Morales.

Morales, who had ordered a revamp of the bureau, has been stymied by temporary restraining orders filed by subordinates affected by the latter.

Of what use is a chief who can't reassign his own

Subtropic warming seen creating bigger deserts

WASHINGTON—DAYTIS AT-mosphere is warming faster over the subtropical flats anywhere else, which could mean bigger deserts and more drought from Africa to Australia to the Middle East, researchers said on Thursday.

The fast-heating area girdles the globe at about 30 degrees north and south latitude—including the southern United States, southern China and north Africa to the Northern Hemisphere, and southern Australia, South Africa and southern South America in the Southern Hemisphere.

Based on 25 years of satellite data, researchers at the University of Washington also determined that the jet streams—a current of westerly winds that help drive weather in both hemispheres—have shifted about 70 miles (112.7 km) toward each respective pole.

This is important because the jet streams mark the northern and southern boundaries of the tropic climatic zones, said John Wallace, an atmospheric scientist and researcher of a research paper in this week's Science Journal. The top researcher said the paper means the zones are expanding.

The research is not predictive, but does show a long-term trend, Wallace said by telephone.

"If [this jet stream shift] is going to creep and it just creeps for ten, 20 miles [112.7 km], that's not a big deal," he said. "But if it were to continue at the same rate over the next century, then that would amount to a couple of hundred kilometers and that would start to have significant effects."

The dry subtropical climates regions, which contain some of the world's major deserts, could expand into temperate regions, Wallace said. Areas such as the Mediterranean, southern Europe and the southern part of the Middle East could have a tendency toward more drought, Wallace said.

The same might happen in southern Australia and South Africa, he said.

The study does not address whether this warming is due to the greenhouse effect or some other factor, or different factors previous models, which cast the fastest warming in the tropics, rather than the subtropics.

The greenhouse effect is seen as a major cause for global warming, in which so-called greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide, trap the Earth like a blanket, keeping the sun's warmth.

Some greenhouse warming is natural, but many scientists believe that accelerated warming over the last century was caused by human activities from pushing coal-burning power plants and the use of other fossil fuels.

Faster subtropical warming in the lower atmosphere, which moves the jet streams, could push storm tracks toward the poles, possibly reducing winter precipitation in places like southern Europe, including the Alps, and southern Australia, the scientists said in a statement. *Reuters*

In Japan, ex-Livedoor execs admit to fraud

TOKYO—FORMER EXECUTIVES of the once high-flying Internet firm Livedoor admitted Friday to fraud allegations as they went on trial for a scandal that rocked Japan's financial and political circles.

The four executives, once known for their casual dress and **bomb** wears, wore dark suits and looked humbly at the ground as **prosecutors read charges** of hiding financial losses.

"In principle, I acknowledge that the facts in the indictment are correct," Yoshi Miyauchi, Livedoor's 38-year-old former chief financial officer, told the Tokyo District Court.

"I am reexamining myself over the crimes I have committed. I feel very sorry for causing trouble to many people," he said.

Three other ministers—Fumito Okamoto and Osamu Sakurai to—also admitted all or part of the charges. However, two accountants who are also on trial denied they cooked the books.

The former top executives are expected to allege wrongdoing by Livedoor's flamboyant founder, Takafumi Horie, whose trial is expected in July.

Horie, who has been a year ago **ran for parliament with the blessing** of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, has maintained his innocence.

The spiky-haired 33-year-old used to be a media darling for mounting aggressive, albeit unsuccessful, takeovers bids and showing up on Japan's hermit-reporter-fraught media in a T-shirt.

Prosecutors said the four executives on trial Friday "conspired" with Horie and falsely reported 5.83 billion yen ($45 million) in gross profit for the year to September 2004 to hide actual losses of some 500 million yen in the company. *AFP*

O JERUSALEM
Israelis dance with flags May 25 during the Jerusalem Day parade in downtown Jerusalem. More than 40,000 Israelis turned out to mark the 38th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem, when Israel reversed east Jerusalem from Jordanian control during the Arab-Israeli war on June 7, 1967. *AFP*

Nepal king warned: Behave or you're dust

KATMANDU—HUMBLED KING Gyanendra must "behave" or he has no future even as a ceremonial monarch, Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat told AFP in revealing a royal spending spree before absolute rule was brought to an end.

Gyanendra's comfort had been "very good" in the month since he relinquished his 14-month grip on power and watched as parliament dashed his powers, wiped the word "royal" from the census's institutions and ended Nepal's status as the world's last Hindu kingdom.

Mahat has vowed to cut back on spending palace expenses that rose to more than $50 million in the nine months before Dynasty, the puppet's axide following weeks of mass antiregime rallies by his total ally.

That was, when the king had in

WORLDBRIEFS

Probe expected to show Marines killed Iraqis

WASHINGTON—A military investigation into the deaths of two dozen Iraqis last November is expected to find that a small number of Marines in session ordered unnecessary, unprovoked firings of civilians, said congressional, military and Pentagon officials on Thursday. Two lawyers involved in discussions about individual Marines' testimonies said they thought the investigation could result in charges of murder, a capital offense. That possibility and the emerging details of the killings have raised fears that the incident could be the gravest case involving misconduct by American ground forces in Iraq. Officials briefed on preliminary results of the inquiry said the civilians killed at Haditha, a western Iraqi town about 250 miles northwest of Baghdad, included women and children. Some were shot at point-blank range in their homes after the Marines' convoy was attacked by a roadside bomb that killed one Marine. Other civilians died in the crossfire of a subsequent firefight, officials said. *AFP*

Car bomb attack kills 8 in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—A car bomb exploded in an outdoor market Friday in eastern Baghdad, killing at least eight people and wounding 31, police said, as Iraq's new prime minister appointed three more security officials to round his Shiite-Kurd majority cabinet. The announcement came on Thursday, a day that saw 72 killings, including the deaths of two US soldiers who were killed by a roadside bomb in southern Baghdad. Violence resumed Friday when a car bomb exploded in an outdoor market in eastern Baghdad, killing at least eight people and wounding 31, hospital security official Sgt. Salaah Mohsen said. *AP*

Hun Sen bans 3G phones over porn fears

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia—Prime Minister Hun Sen on Friday banned video-capable mobile phones in Cambodia in a bid to curb rising distribution of pornography, fending a request from his wife. Hun Sung, along with the arrests of several children's pornographic videos, has recently urged that ban be prohibited the use of third-generation, or 3G, phones in the impoverished country because they can be used to upload obscene images. Phones with 3G technology can receive more digital information than their predecessors and other features such as high-speed internet access, high-quality video, and music services. In a petition addressed to Hun Sen dated May 2, Bun Rany urged that telecom companies "should not provide 3G services for social morality" and could increase the "sexual exploitation of women and children and other crimes that would ruin our society in a very dark way." *AP*

Theft of data on US veterans may cost $500M

WASHINGTON—THE HEAD OF the US Department of Veterans Affairs faced angry lawmakers on Thursday and described how the theft of a device the size of an iPod containing personal data on 26.5 million veterans may cost taxpayers as much as $500 million.

"It's a veteran myself ... I am mad as hell," Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson told the House Committee on Veterans Affairs.

Nicholson said a department employee who had taken the data home without authorization was placed on administrative leave and "other people are also in my sights as a result of this." The data was stolen from the employee's home in Maryland.

Nicholson said he could not promise the government would cover all potential losses by veterans, but suggested Congress pass a law to do so.

"There is no sign that any of this [stolen names, Social Security numbers and birth dates] is being used at this time," Nicholson said. Officials can use such data to create credit card or other identity theft scams.

Asked how much it would cost to prevent and cover potential losses, Nicholson estimated "way north of $1.00 million" and Delmor rule out a total cost as high as $500 million.

Members of the panel, however, said they are the incident as part of broader administrative problems in the department. *Reuters*

NICE TO HAVE AROUND THE HOUSE!
Two 5-week-old jaguar cubs look out from their exhibit at the Stone Zoo in Stoneham, Mass., May 20. *AP*

Pope says Mass at Warsaw square

WARSAW, POLAND—POPE Benedict XVI celebrated Mass for an estimated 270,000 people Sunday in a rain-drenched Warsaw square where his predecessor, John Paul II, inspired Poland's Solidarity movement against communist rule in a historic 1979 visit.

People lined the streets to wave and cheer as Benedict's popemobile passed, and church bells pealed. An aide held an umbrella as Benedict presided a high Mass platform topped by a 23-meter metal cross.

Spectators stood resolutely in ponchos and under umbrellas, filling vast Hrubieki Square before the 9:30 a.m. start. Benedict is to visit Auschwitz to pay tribute to his fellow Jews and Germans—a main theme of his trip to Poland.

Aneta Orzeszek, 18, dripping wet without a raincoat, said the weather's mistakes going inside.

"No way," she said. "This is one of the most important events that would ever happen in Poland and we don't know if we'll ever see the Pope here again."

Boy Scouts distributed tarpaulins for rain covers, and people climbed on fences and sang along with the choir.

The choice of site for the Mass recalled John Paul II's bold call to "renew the face of this land" at the square, then called Victory Square, during his triumphant first visit to his native land after being elected Pope.

His appearance challenged the atheist communist authorities and is credited by Solidarity founder Lech Walesa with energizing the emerging trade union resistance to Soviet-backed communist rule, which collapsed in 1989-90.

The crowds was less than in 1979, when some 300,000 people jammed the square, with some 750,000 in the surrounding streets. Police spokesperson Paweł Bochniak provided Friday's crowd estimate. *AP*

POPE Benedict XVI at the Warsaw cathedral May 25. The Pope has urged Catholics in Poland to keep the memory of John Paul II alive. *AP*

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ghico

Bush, Blair acknowledge mistakes, defend Iraq war

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair bluntly acknowledged that the Iraq war had been marked by "mistakes" and "missteps" but insisted that the world must support the new Baghdad government.

During an extraordinary 50-minute White House joint conference Thursday, the political brothers-in-arms expressed distress at many aspects of the campaign which brought down Saddam Hussein but also undermined their own popularity.

Bush expressed regret for the Abu Ghraib prison scandal and some of his tough-talking comments.

Blair said the "de-Baathification" of Iraq—the cleaning out of Saddam followers—had been badly handled.

Bush and Blair (left) at the White House East Room press conference. AFP

There was none of the determined bravado that marked earlier joint conferences after their respective meetings over the past three years.

"No question that the Iraq war has created a sense of commentators here in America," said Bush, "I mean, when you turn on your TV screens and see innocent people die day in and day out, it affects the mentality of our country."

"You remember since liberation has turned out in the way we had expected or hoped. We've learned from our mistakes, adjusted our methods and have built on our successes," said the US president.

Bush said he should not have made gung-ho comments such as "bring 'em on" when rebuffing the insurgents in July 2003 as the attacks on US troops and Iraqi civilians mounted.

"I learned some lessons about expressing myself maybe in a little more sophisticated manner," he declared.

Both Bush and Blair have seen their public standings collapse over the past year, in large part because of the war, but both insist they were right to order the March 2003 invasion.

"The decision to remove Saddam Hussein from power was controversial. We did not find the weapons of mass destruction that we all believed were there, and that's raised questions about whether the sacrifice in Iraq was worthwhile," Bush said.

"Despite setbacks and missteps, I strongly believe we did and are doing the right thing," he added.

Bush refused to set a timetable for the withdrawal of the 135,000 US troops in Iraq, insisting "we will keep the force level there necessary to win."

With a majority of US public opinion now against the war, Bush said, "It's important for the American people to know that politics isn't going to make the decision as to the size of our force level." AFP

It could be Blair's last visit to White House

By Jennifer Loven

WASHINGTON—THE BRITISH PRESS ACcompanying Prime Minister Tony Blair to the White House seemed to take it for granted that he won't long for his world leader role. Only President George W. Bush pronounced—even Blair never believed to correct them.

"Wait a minute," Bush said after a second question from the British side assumed Blair's departure in fact.

Blair's government has battled from crisis to crisis in recent weeks, and his Labor Party suffered a severe setback in recent local elections. Blair has said he will not stand in the next general election slated for 2010, but speculation of his exit party have stepped up as time to name a timetable for departing sooner.

Though Blair has not done so publicly, it was reported over the weekend in Britain that Blair has told ministers that he plans to leave office next summer. Blair's office has refused to confirm the arrangement.

One British reporter asked Blair chuckily if his talk about the necessity of vigorous lead. ership on the United Nations amounts to a job application. The British leader said it wasn't, but then expounded at length on the need for strong international institutions and used the nuclear standoff with Iran as an example.

Later in the hourlong press conference that alternated between questions from the US and British media, another member of Blair's press corps started with "Prime Minister, this is possibly your last official visit to Washington as prime minister." The reporter asked both leaders what they will miss about each other.

"I'll miss the food, and I'm a wine I'll miss," said the US president, looking at his colleague to blue shirt and red tie and then turning more serious about perhaps the most cloudfree ally he has in the world.

"Don't count him out—we are still it to you three wing" Bush said. "I know a man of resolve and courage, and I—my attitude is I want him to be here as long as I'm the president." AP

SPORTS
E-mail: pi_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor: Teddyboy B. Molmisa

SCOTT Strange takes a breather and plays with his golf ball while awaiting his turn to tee off at No. 4

RP OPEN

Juvic 4 behind leaders

Strange, Chang share halfway 1-stroke lead

By Manny R. Castillo

JUVIC PAGUNSAN MADE THE adjustments early Thursday evening, shook off the jitters yesterday, and for the third straight year made himself a hot contender in the Philippine Open.

Pagunsan summed his plans as the leaders lined up the top Filipino pro after a 2-under-par 70 gave him a share of fourth spot halfway through the $300,000-Asian Tour event, just five shots off the lead jointly held by Australian Scott Strange and Taiwanese Chang Ting-pih.

"It's only his second start as a pro so his name is still unknown to the top Filipino pros after a 2-under-par 70 gave him a share of fourth spot halfway through the $300,000-Asian Tour event, just five shots off the lead jointly held by Australian Scott Strange and Taiwanese Chang Ting-pih.

Laylo triumph seals draw with Lithuania

STANDINGS After Round 5

Men: 5½—Karen Avrukh, Yi Wei (Serbia); 5—Li Chao (China), Ye Jiangchuan, Dibuntar Saptarshi, Sasikiran Krishnan, Gelfand Boris, Sethuraman S.P. (India), Alonso Rodi, Bernardo Nelson, Ni Hua (China), Georgiev Kiril (Bulgaria), Ganguly Saptarshi, Cheparinov Ivan (Bulgaria), Cheng Hua (China), Ivanchuk Vassily (Ukraine), Ponomariov Ruslan (Ukraine), Ni Hua (China), Wang Yue (China), Bu Xiangzhi (China), Sutovsky Emil (Israel), Grischuk Alexander (Russia), Kamsky Gata, Onischuk Alexander, Shabalov Alexander, Gulko Boris, Akobian Varuzhan (USA), Sasikiran Krishnan (India), Ehlvest Jaan (USA), Bologan Viktor (Moldova), Ivanov Alexander (Canada), Kasimdzhanov Rustam (Uzbekistan), Ivanov Igor (USA), Kosteniuk Alexandra (Russia), Zhao Xue (China), Paehtz Elisabeth (Germany), Goletiani Nino (Georgia), Stefanova Antoaneta (Bulgaria), Gaponenko Inna (Ukraine), Galliamova Alisa (Russia), Zhukova Natalia (Ukraine), Kosintseva Tatiana (Russia), Cramling Pia (Sweden), Zhu Chen (Qatar), Ruan Lufei (China), Ushenina Anna (Ukraine), Zhao Xue (China), Stefanova Antoaneta (Bulgaria), Kosintseva Tatiana (Russia), Cramling Pia (Sweden), Zhu Chen (Qatar), Ruan Lufei (China), Ushenina Anna (Ukraine), Paehtz Elisabeth (Germany), Goletiani Nino (Georgia), Stefanova Antoaneta (Bulgaria), Gaponenko Inna (Ukraine), Galliamova Alisa (Russia), Zhukova Natalia (Ukraine

ASIAN CLUB VOLLEYBALL

Japan whips RP belles

By Jasmine W. Payo

SCORING EASILY FOR POWER-PACKED SPIKES, Japan pummeled the Philippines, 25-16, 25-15, 25-15, in the 2006 Asian Women's Club volleyball championship yesterday at the Mandaluyong Sports Complex.

It was supposed to be high school and college students from Hiyoshi Tenpoku, smashed 49 kills, while the Philippines could only muster 22.

"For this game, I told them we should focus four points, no misses," said Japanese coach Masayoshi Manabe through an interpreter. "We also placed better in defense and we have the height advantage."

Mikiko Kawai also enjoyed a match-best 12 kills and one ace to lead Japan to its first victory after bowing to Kazakhstan in the opener.

Restricted by Team Send, the Philippines absorbed its second straight loss for a 1-2 record.

"When it comes to skills, we can do what they're doing," said Philippine receiver Genevieve Sison. "But they were more consistent and had better physical conditioning."

Earlier, Thailand also cruised to a straight-set victory over Indonesia 25-21, 25-18, 25-21, behind Wilavan Apinyapong's 19 kills.

Thailand joined Japan and Kazakhstan at 1-1, while Indonesia remained winless in three matches.

After getting pounded at the first two sets, unnerved ladies Cherry Ann Mocanaguer kept the Philippines within striking distance, 9-5, early in the third set.

Japan quickly responded, hammering down consecutive kills to take an 11-11 lead.

Mocanaguer had eight kills to pace the Philippine team.

In the eighth leg, defending champion Chinese Taipei, 25-16, 25-21, 25-16, top grab the sole lead at 3-0.

STANDINGS	W	L
China	3	0
Chinese Taipei	3	0
Kazakhstan	1	1
Thailand	1	1
Japan	1	2
Philippines	1	2
Indonesia	0	3

GAMES TODAY

(Mandaluyong Sports Complex)

7 p.m. — Kazakhstan vs. Chinese Taipei (Women's Division)

8:30 p.m. — Chinese Taipei vs. Hong Kong (Men's Division)

(Rizal Memorial Sports Complex)

4 p.m. — Philippines vs. Kazakhstan (Women's Division)

6:30 p.m. — Thailand vs. Malaysia (Men's Division)

Asuncions in semis

KENNIE Asuncion (front) chases a shot over the net as brother and teammate Kennevic looks on.

Keep RP badminton hopes up with win

KENNIE AND KENNEVIC ASUNCION demolished their Indonesian counterparts yesterday to send the Philippines into the semifinals of the Bingo Bonanza Philippine Open badminton championships at the Philsports.

The sensational siblings thrilled an appreciative crowd as they drilled to a variety of shots en route to a 21-12, 21-19 victory over Dwi Dewo and Lili Wibang, thus providing a bright spot after the country's 24 other doubles had bowed out one after the other.

The Filipino pair enjoyed an advantage after having practiced with the Indonesians several times before the start of the tournament sponsored by JEC Bike, PLDT and Smart.

"We knew their game already and I think that helped a lot today because we were able to attack their weakness," said Kennevic, who had teamed up with Wong in the recent doubles. They lost last Thursday night to Malaysians Ye Hi Wong and Tee Hui Chin 12-15, 15-13, 11-15.

The Filipinos, who have slipped to 69th from No. 22 in world rankings due to lack of foreign entry, will meet tougher opponents today in Ni Bashaputra and Muamer Tomar also of Indonesia.

Bashaputra and Tomar, the 3rd-seed Olympics silver medal winners, drubbed top seed Songgod Boonyawatana and Natchata Watcharachaikul, 21-13, 21-16.

Still basking in their victory, Kennevic admitted that today's task will be doubly hard as they haven't yet played the really experienced Indonesian pair.

"They are a veteran pair, tricky in positioning, but we will try our best and hopefully come up with another victory in front of our countrymen," said the 20-year-old Kennevic.

Also making the semifinals of the mixed doubles were Indonesians Muhamad Rizal and Gempa Pak, who battered rest 1-13-8, 21-9 over Vicknesh Thanda Rai Nair and Nguyen Hoang Ie Ngoc, and Thai Sudkit Prapakamol and Saisaka Thonsaghangluan who bested Italy's Hans Raffener and Agnese Allegrini, 21-7, 21-12.

Enduro Series first leg starts

THE FIRST LEG OF THE 2006 ENDURO MX Big Light Adventure Series kicks off in Cebu City today. Featuring competition in the novice category.

The race, a four-to-six hour sprint, is open to beginners, students, puppies and weekend warriors, who want to experience the thrill the event has to offer.

With more than P100,000 to stake, race director Sonny Gamoza promises a more challenging race in the event promoted by Sun Mig Light.

Also to be given to winners are Sun Mig Light premium prizes and trophies. The event is also supported by SM Rental Promos Arena Cebu, Converse, Body Project, Unilegar, North Face and Speedpro.

A total of 100 racers are expected to take part in this annual adventure race that promises to get bigger and better in its third year.

The Enduro adventure series tests the endurance, nerve and skills of the participants who will face a lot of unexpected trials during the race.

The champion in the Novice category receives P15,000 while second placer will get P10,000.

SPORTSWATCH

Espiritu eyes CSI supremacy

VICTOR ESPIRITU OF FEU-DLSU MC THE BABES TO BEAT while Dan Lucanas from the Ateneo de Manila Sacking Branch Invitational (CSI) Criterium Race is held today in Marikina City. Espiritu is 12 points ahead of San Leonardo Bernabe Lucanas. The San Fernando native also set an early finishing within the last spot. 10 stage events with the second half slated later this year, according to the organizing Star Sales and Management Corp. The event is sponsored by Magnet, PCSO, PLDT, Mikrotik, Fitbit, Specialized Bicycles, Alfa Cycling Tours, Speed Collegiate, Satellite Cable Max. Details for the San Fernando event, PNC, Mt. 102 and the 84.

Jr PBA | Caloocan triumphs

CALOOCAN DEFEATS CALOOCAN CITY PRIDE in a preseason showing in the 2006 Barangay Galaxy PBA junior summer league, routing Galaxy Talk 'N Text Antipolo, 80-61, yesterday at the Ateneo Gym. Galaxy Caloocan Campus Director signed Caloocan to four games to close the race to Group A. Galaxy Alaska Pacific Diamond Galaxy Antipolo, Charles Alfa-Galaxy, 70-66, in Group A. In the day's other game, Galaxy PBA Greats doubled its first-win in four starts by stomping Cebu Cola Manila Expo, 69-48.

Castillo seeks JVC semis

DEL PACIFICO'S LOUIS MIGUEL CASTILLO will look to advance to the semifinals of the Junior Volleyball Championship when he faces Ateneo de Manila's Jeremy Gonzales in the boys' 14 under-singles round of the 2006 Open Junior Championships at Old Sta. Rosa in Laguna. Castillo is unopposed and Dorothy Grisela, 21-8, 21-6, to arrange a quarter-finals clash with Michelle Cruz, who beat Arabella Lazarte of Sports Zone, 21-15, 21-9. Results of the other Grand Championship Flights are Donaire, 21-6, 21-13, to set up a clash with Ateneo's Jeremy Yang, who downed Trony Magpantay of Power and Speed, 21-15, 21-11. The tournament is sponsored by JVC/KENWOOD, Inc. and organized by NBL.

Big guests in chess finals

Mark Bellaflor, CHESS PERENNIAL KING OF THE PHILIPPINES president Rep. Prospero Pichay and secretary-general Joey Antipuesto Barcelona, in partnership with the Manila Chess Club, will host the International Chess Festival of Champions at the Manila Hotel on June 1 to 11. Bellaflor and his fellow Grandmasters will be joined by the National Juniors and Age Groups Grand Finals will be presented at 12 noon today at the Sta. Rosa Mall in Mandaluyong City. The Bellaflor tournament is also expected to be joined by national masters Jonel Caguioa, Oliver Barbosa and Julius Joseph De Ramos in the boys' division and Women International Master Jayson Gonzales and Kimberly Casimiro.

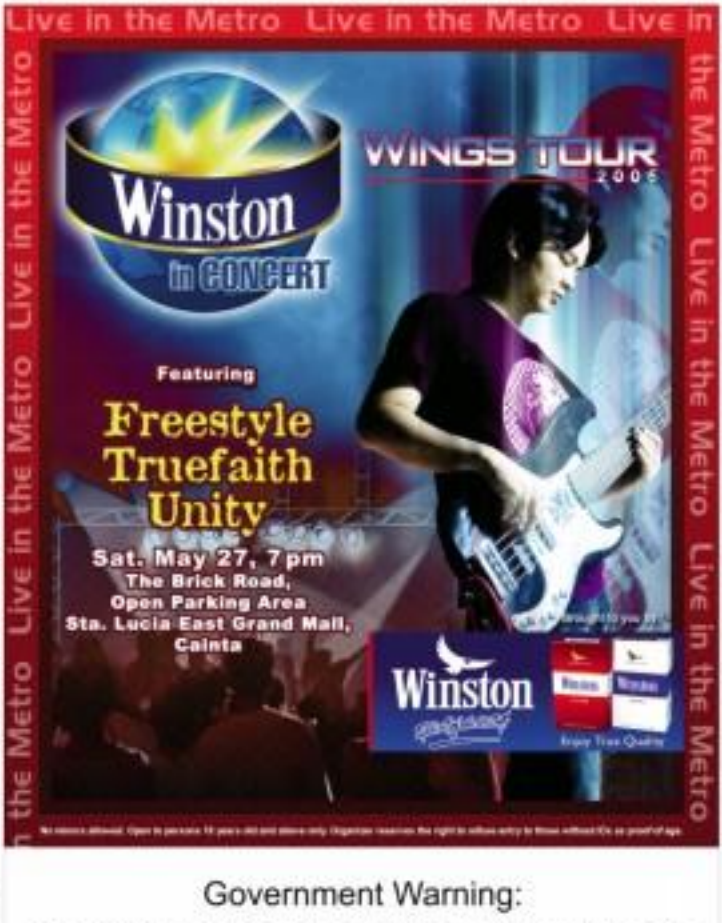
(Richie Buenaventura, contributor)

Dela Cruz, Tan tag title

RICO DELA CRUZ OF GARRISON'S INTERNATIONAL Association of Baguio, in partnership with Conservation of Luzon Gymnastics Federation Association, emerged champion. Yesterday night in the WPGB Rattlesnake Gymkhana derby at the Amanda Coliseum. Dela Cruz and Tan's Dakoti Lang-Lang derby scored eight consecutive victories in Gold and Silver. Juan Capello of Baguio was runner-up finisher with 7 points. Supporters of the event were spectators Pankha Rosario Bonifacio Gonzalez Flowers, Rhodnell Sherlock by Lakbay, Shirley Fresh by Ashish Private Stables, Archie by Excellence Gymnastics Association and Secretary Rosario Inspections by PNL Elite Stables.

Bigtime derby set at SJC

THE SAN JUAN LIONS BOOSTERS ASSOCIATION INC. of the Philippines is now hosting exhibits at The San Juan Coliseum this Wednesday, May 31, with Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 as sponsor. The event serves as the pre-tournament legislative to the GAW Cockers of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA). Cockers of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. Rules for the derby are as follows: (1) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (2) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (3) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (4) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (5) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (6) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (7) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (8) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (9) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby. (10) Each Cocker of the San Juan Lions Boosters Association Inc. (SJLBA) will be competing in the Sagupaan Commissioner 2006 Derby.



Government Warning:

Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

DETROIT Pistons forward Tayshaun Prince (right) dunks the ball against the defense of Miami Heat center Shaquille O'Neal. AP

WORLD CUP

Casillas guards Spain's dreams

MADRID—RAUL WAS ONCE BY FAR the best soccer player in Spain's team since he was his Real Madrid teammate but Casillas is the country's most influential player.

The goalkeeper has already had seven seasons in Real's first team and is preparing for his fourth trophy-filled international tournament, even though he has only turned 25.

He is practically the only top player at Real to have escaped criticism over the past three seasons and has, almost single-handedly, held the star-studded Spanish defense together when they have threatened to collapse.

A product of the club's youth setup, Casillas burst into the Real first team in 1999 aged 18 after an injury to Bodo Illgner.

He won first given a fast-track promotion to the national side, winning a call-up for Euro 2000, although he did not win his first cap until a friendly with Sweden the next season.

Casillas was the hero of Real's European Cup win in 2002 when he came off the bench to produce three exceptional saves to prevent his side's 2-1 advantage over Bayern Leverkusen.

A few days later a freak accident to Valencia keeper Santiago Cañizares, who dropped an after-shave bottle on his foot, made Casillas Spain's first-choice at the 2002 World Cup.

He kept the team alive in a penalty shoot-out win over Ireland but was unable to prevent similar heroics against South Korea in the quarterfinals.

Casillas left the Coronavirus in Spain's life. 2 Europe

A particular world-class player, he has a gift for spectacular reflex saves, and a reputation for being almost impossible to beat in one-on-one situations.

Despite occasional lapses during with high balls, he remains Spain's most consistent performer and is the player most likely to make a difference if the progress beyond the group phase. Reuters

CASILLAS: Quick reflexes

Pistons avert collapse

Cool off Heat rally to square Eastern finals

AUBURN HILLS—THE DETroit Pistons held off a furious late rally to edge the Miami Heat 92-88 in Game Two of the Eastern Conference finals on Thursday, tying up the best-of-seven series at 1-1.

After dumping a 4-1 surprise home loss in the series opener, the Pistons blanked early Sunday centers Ben Wallace making in the locker and building an 11-point lead by the third quarter.

But the Heat, led by guard Dwayne Wade, rallied with a blistering 17-point run in the final 30 seconds to cut the lead to just two points, thanks to a 40-foot Smush contribution above.

Seven guard Chauncey Billups struggled early to find his three-pointer but thrown in the final seconds before reserve guard Lindsey Hunter sealed the win with a steal for Wade at the three-point line in Intercourse.

Tayshaun Prince ranked the leaders for Detroit with 16 fourth-quarter points while the rest of the Pistons offense sputtered.

Prince, who ended with a team-high 24 points, was called for a potentially devastating clock violation when he could not find an open player on one of his attempts, just 20 seconds left.

Prince said afterwards he had been trying to call timeout but was ignored by the referee.

"I was pretty upset about it, but things happen," Prince told reporters. "I just move on."

The referee play grew Miami the ball and set the stage for a crucial three-point shot by Wade that took the score to 90-88, and seemed to give a stunning comeback victory within reach.

Pistons coach Flip Saunders said his team was in danger of running its way to an open lane as the clock ticked down.

"What happens in many times, you get near to the end of the game and you start playing not to lose instead of playing to win," he told reporters. "You want for that clock to keep rolling to the point to end."

Wade said the Heat would need the intensity they found in the final minutes of play to take Game Three.

"We've got to keep that same mind through out this game," he said. "You can't do it against a Detroit team...dig yourself into a hole because this team will not lose themselves.

Miami center Shaquille O'Neal, who had 22 points, 12 rebounds and four blocked shots, also said the Heat came active down.

"We know that they're the best team in the East and we know they were going to regroup and play," he said.

"We wanted to pick it up inside and could still had a couple chances to win, but we had too many turnovers and we missed free throws."

Pistons coach Flip Saunders also knew it was a difficult game, emerged in a surprise evening opinion. He really going with seven first-quarter points and nine for the game.

4 HP in SEARCHERS

Tan Ho picks up 3rd straight title

TAMPA BAY (AGENCIES) TAMPA PHILIPPINE HOPE TAKES 13 BANGAY TITLE after posting a 69, 6-0 victory over Ivy and Shalise Dikanti yesterday in the golf "D" series finals of the 2006 Hino Pinoy Junior Tennis Tour at the Hino Memorial Tennis Center. The boys "12 series title went to Jacob Lagman, who scored a 6-0, 6-1 win over Jose Portelo Morales in the final. 14-year-old Tan Ho, top seed Pablo Chang 9 during the 14-Round Match, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 advance to the finals against No. 2 Carlos Tarrido, who 6-2, 6-0, 6-1 victory over No. 5 R. Bello Santos. The Bacoor Hydrated Jacks called and Alec Cruz 6-0, 7-6 (5) to make the boys' Wrestle Rule against No. 3 seed Prasad Lango, who outscored No. 4 Rahul Reina 8-3, 6-4. Boys' 14 senior top seed Kyle Carlos outlasted Jacob Lagman 6-3, 6-3, in boys title showdown with No. 4 Leander Lopez, who 2, 6-4 victory over No. 2 seed Jeremy Perez celebrate. Below, Lagman celebrates her triumph. 14, 6-4, and accepted Junior Director's cup played 8800 Lucena, 14-8, 1-6-4, to advance to the winner Wrestle Rule.

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LAMCO

Editor Nestor U. Torre
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SATURDAY Special

'ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?'

Sharon is *fabulous* at 40

CUNETA. Unique ability to turn trash into musical magic.

By Rita P. Avila

ONE NIGHT, DURING A LONG drive home from work, Sharon Cuneta's guitar-driven cover of Rupert Holmes' "Terminal" is playing on the car stereo, and we finally understand and empathize with the sentiment behind the sad love song.

Hailed by Jonathan Ong's deceptively upbeat arrangement, dramas' one-hanky cliffs—nine of 16 songs featured in the Megastar's sleek new collection, "Isn't It Romantic?"—evoke with painful irony.

Romance

Suddenly, this "Terminal" is no longer the trite and soppy standard it's always been to us. And our heart goes out to the lonely career woman who is wistfully singing about finding romance at a bus terminal, and pinning up on a love that might have been her escape from an empty, arid life.

Such is the power of Cuneta's storytelling gift. As a performer, Sharon's emotive ability is unsurpassed, and her sincerity is beyond question. Whatever shortcomings she has in terms of range is conveniently masked by her unique ability to turn trash into musical magic.

But, the crystal-clear singing she so ably demonstrated in her albums in the '90s like "Scenes," "For Broken Hearts Only" and "Sharon and Love" may have slightly waned in recent years. But, as Sharon marks her 40th year, her sense of consciousness, contemplative introspection and unprecedented joie de vivre have never been so noticeable. What better album to celebrate the milestone than "Isn't It Romantic?," which showcases the Megastar at her most vocally confident?

Strain

She only hits a snag when the pushes beyond her usual capacity: In Bernie Wundes's "Until You Come Back to Me," for instance, the strain almost robs the singer-to-be-revered of vocal improvisations.

In hard-to-sing tunes like "Time Still Revolves" or "Turn This World Into a Land of Magic" (remade recently by Regine Velasquez as "Bukas ng Bukas Ka"), Cuneta has proven that she's no stranger to songs with various degrees of difficulty, and those that demand a wide range.

In recent years, however, Sharon has acquired a deeper voice that fits certain song types more than others. That, in itself, is not such a bad thing. In the new's most beautifully-packaged local album, she breathes life and meaning into old favorites.

Through Sharon's interpretive skill, Jim Gamboa's "Isn't It Romantic?," Boy Jr. Sarao's "Sometimes a Love Goes Wrong," Raynold's "Is Dakila crime and a Woman," and Ely Buendia's "Tuloy Pa Rin sa Iisang Mundo" are successfully rebathed into seemingly brand-new love songs.

If you miss listening to the Megastar's less popular but otherwise excellent jazz-tinged small gems like "It's Not You," "Lambing Ka Lang," "Make It Happen," "Both Sides Now," "Parang Bulaw" or "Hanggang Ilang Ilang-ilang Kailan?," shelling your hard-earned bucks for this ably-produced album won't be for naught.

Lineup

Also included in the robust lineup are covers of "Simply Love," "Laughter in the Rain," "I Have to Say I Love You in a Song," "Heaven Knows," "Like A Lover," "Rubbing Song," "With A Little Help from My Friends," a new version of Sinch digest and Lani Hall's "I Don't Want You to Go," and James Taylor's "If I Keep My Heart Out of Sight," which she dedicates to her husband, Sen. Francis Pangilinan.

Sharon, however, saves the best for last: for the collection's final cut, the lovingly revives one of the best songs of her sterling recording career—Odette Quesada's "It Love Again."

It would have been hard to measure up to

HER latest album is a vocal showcase of the Megastar at her most vocally confident.

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P68

The mouse that roared, the lion that squeaked

KNAVE. Intelligent personal interpretation.

By Nestor U. Torre

SOME BOOKS MAKE GOOD movies, but others have a hard time transforming themselves into marketable films. Case in point: "The Da Vinci Code." It's ironic that, after all of the controversy and religious unction that greeted its opening date, Ron Howard's film version of Dan Brown's best-selling book is still bogged down by—words.

Age and mystery

Not that director Howard doesn't work hard to come up with alternately beautiful and brooding images that give the production its appropriate patina of age and mystery.

However, these striking images eventually take the back seat to the film script's efforted attempt to make verbal sense of all of the new tales on the genuine wellsprings of Christianity that Brown used his arsenal of thought represent.

The worst victim in the movie's cast in this regard is Audrey Tautou, the putative granddaughter of the man murdered at the movie's start—and the loop-last link to the speculative union between Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene.

Despite her character's importance, Tautou is often reduced to asking a unending series of questions to be answered by other characters played by the film's other lead actors, about all of the "Gnostic" misinterpretations of early Church history.

Documentary

As such, the cousin of more like a documentary than an actress in a religious dramatic-thriller. What a waste of talent.

At the same time, we must note that, for all of her shortcomings, Tautou is too hard-headed and even-tempered to make an interesting presence when it's eventually revealed that she's the direct descendant of the Merovingian from-Magdalene gnostic line.

Ian Hanks also fails in past movies as the film's lead actor, because his character, for all of his expertise, has little personal investment in the film's ongoing investigation and convoluted drama.

Compelling

The actor who comes in the most compelling performance is Jan McKellen as another expert who has much more at stake in the tangled plot's denouement.

And Bettany as the plot's most visible villain also comes on strong, but his performance is compromised by excessively obvious "troll" (prompted by the name of "pond," it turns out).

It's also sadly predictable that most of the "rounding" device in the film are perspective "misguided" defenders of the faith who still come out nothing, not even martyrs, to clamp down on the Anne-Magdalene "secret" that could "expose" Christianity as a faith that's founded on a "lie."

Subjective

The rather slow-moving and evening of church history's "festival" asserts how the production's general motives, and lend credence to Christians' view that the book—and now the film—is an attack on some of the basic tenets of their faith.

After viewing Howard's film version, however, we can state that Christians have little to fear from the sequel, because the production fails in "prove" to alternative view of Jesus Christ and the Church he founded.

Making it does not make it so, particularly in the world of film, where statements have to be dramatically

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Flat characters bog down new 'Poseidon' remake

By Nestor Torre

SOME 30 YEARS AGO, there was this movie about a bunch of people trying to get out of a cruise ship that had been turned upside-down by a 110-foot rogue wave.

Based on a book by Paul Gallico, "The Poseidon Adventure" turned out to be one of the first in a long line of what we now call disaster flicks, but it's certainly remained one of the most memorable.

RUSSELL AND LUCAS. Their characters' scenes take a back seat to action and special effects.

Mystery

In fact, why anybody thought it needed to be remade at all is a mystery, but that's what they did. So now, we have our own 21st century, streamlined and CGI-enhanced version, "Poseidon."

Hollywood apparently has nothing but remakes, which is a bit odd since they're always terrific prospects, and it certainly doesn't help that "The Poseidon Adventure" is considered a classic. A campier sort of classic, to be sure, but a classic nonetheless...and one that hit oddly different chords when cut in patently sentimental as the reluctant hero.

In director Wolfgang Petersen's "Poseidon," that role is given to Josh Lucas, who plays professional gambler Dylan Johns. We patently need more and blockbuster tendencies there, and though they've tried to make him unlikeable about his heroic role as well, you'll only believe it for the first few minutes.

But that strong characterization are the point of the movie. In fact, they're hardly important at all. The real stars of this let's-get-out-of-this-sinking-ship adventure are the action and special effects.

Clocking in at less than 100 minutes, "Poseidon" has got to be one of the shortest feature films Petersen has made.

Appetite for gore

By focusing on the action and cutting out the characters' back stories and the conflicts between characters, Petersen is investing on the producers' fast pace and the audience's appetite for gore to keep us interested.

After all, people who watch disaster movies view them for the disaster and not for good character development.

Disaster

It's not just our disaster, either—expect waves are only the first of the eventually-fatal problems facing the intrepid passengers (including a former mayor of New York City, played by Kurt Russell) who decide to find their way out. There are also flash fires, electrocutions, heavy objects falling and, of course, water, water everywhere.

Petersen delivers on the action and the effects (though some of them look too much like CGI), but they're not quite high-octane enough to make up for the movie script's faint lines and flat characters.

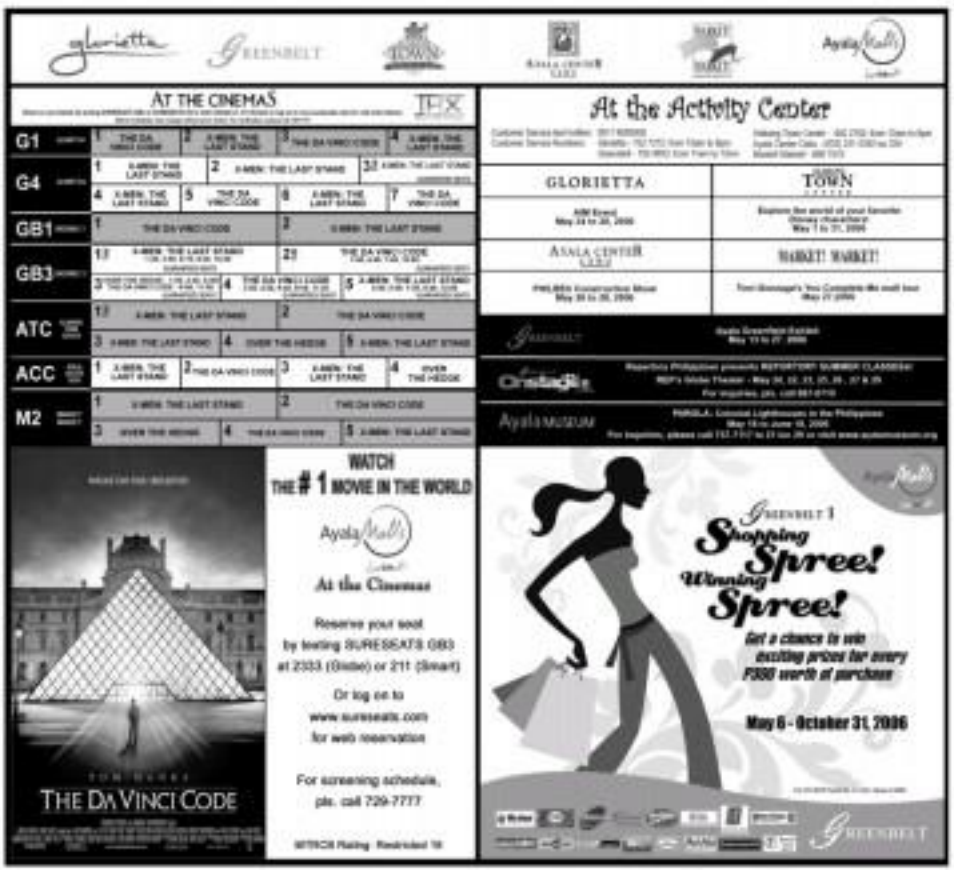
The mouse that roared...

Rommel Gozo

"process" to impinge on viewers' sensibilities and prompt an affirmative emotional response. This doesn't happen in the "Da Vinci" film, and that's both a pity and a relief.

Where Hanson's book became a surprise best-seller, a presumed lead as the publishing world's Mouse That Roared. Now that its long-awaited film version has hit the screens, however, it has turned out to be The Lion That Squeaked.

Thanks for a cautionary, instructive tale for other filmmakers who think that all they need to come up with a good film is a best-selling book.



Fiesta

Mantawi Festival kicks off Asean Leaders Summit

Participants of Mandaue City's Mantawi Festival bring it on as the people dance to the unique beat of this yearly festival that commemorates the culture and history of this historic place where 442 years ago, the Spanish Galleon Trade began. The event also kicks off the build-up to the coming Asean Leaders Summit to be held in December at the PTEC-owned Cebu International Convention Center (CICC) being built at the new Mandaue South Reclamation Area, a new 196-hectare commercial area designated to be the new heart of the City of Mandaue. Shown is the Sarigan contingent.

CHOWKING FLORAL FLOAT WINS PENAGBENGA 2004 HALL OF FAME

Chowking won the Best Float Prize award (Hall of Fame) in the recently concluded 2004 Penagbenga Flower Festival in Baguio City. This year's float themed 'The Family in Harmony with Nature' is the third year in a row that Chowking came out the judges' favorite in terms of symbolisms and ritual creativity. Despite the win, the company will concede to participate in the annual event in the non-competing category in the coming years.

Dance in the streets sun protected

IT'S THE PEAK MONTH OF SUMMER! the weather is still warm and humid, but still we go out and join the festive atmosphere under the sun. It's good to know that all the sunscreen protection needed can be provided by Banana Boat, the number one sunscreen product in the United States.

Banana Boat sun protection products have been recently launched in the Philippines in time for everyone's fiesta requirements. Banana Boat from Playtex offers a complete range of pre-sun, during and after sun products that come in non-greasy, fragrance-free and sunscreen skin-vein GENIC and vitamin E combined formulations. Banana Boat is appropriate for all types of Asian skin because it provides tried and proven solutions for people seeking to protect themselves yet provide the appropriate skin tanning without the actual and harmful sun exposure.

Solar rays consist of invisible UV rays. There are three types of UV rays, namely UVC (the shortest wavelength band and filtered out by the atmosphere and ozone layer); UVB (also known as the tanning ray and penetrates into the skin causing sunburns and skin cancers); and UVA (which passes effortlessly through the atmosphere with the longest wavelength band and equally damaging, causing skin aging and melanomas. Sunscreens or sunblocks provide the tested solution in preventing all these types of UV-induced skin diseases.

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Tanduay 1854 is uniquely "Filipino" as it is derived primarily from Philippine sugar cane which is considered among the best in the world. It is aged in oak barrels with first class Extra Neutral Alcohol. Carefully selected imported ingredients are used in the blending process. During the production, utmost care is given every step of the process to ensure the distinctive quality, taste, aroma and flavor of the rhum. Tanduay 1854 is manufactured in fully integrated modern facilities equipped with the latest state-of-the-art technology. To match the product's excellent qualities, Tanduay 1854 is packed in an elegantly designed white translucent box.

Tanduay Distillers takes pride in introducing Tanduay 1854 to the local and export market. Rounded on a rich heritage, inspired by over 150 years of manufacturing expertise, Tanduay aims to give the consumer the best possible product at reasonable prices. It is the company's way of thanking Filipinos for making Tanduay a part of their lives for many generations.

SATURDAY special

Why Taylor Hicks is 2006's American Idol

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST TUESDAY, THE HUSKY POPULIST "knew-how kid" singing-cop finally unseated this year's winner—Taylor Hicks. The praiseworthy grey-haired underdog got a clear majority of the record-setting 63.4 million votes cast in the grand finals, enabling him to receive the also gifted and charismatic Katharine McPhee.

Instructive tale

Katharine is a great combination of talent and beauty, so why did more viewers-voters dote on Taylor, the Web? Therein lies a pop-instructive tale.

When Taylor first auditioned for "American Idol," judges Randy Jackson and Paula Abdul found him refreshingly original and funny, but the chronically-cranky Simon Cowell protested that he wouldn't survive the next round.

But, wonder of wonders, Taylor did survive. More than that, he was soon streaming a lot of fans who liked his "soulful" approach to performance, and promptly lolled themselves in his feel Pound.

In time, even the haughty Simon would apologize for his scathing disdain for Taylor, and even cited him as one of his top three bets to win the tilt.

For her part, Katharine was also howling them over, but in a quieter and more gradual way. To be sure, she occasionally came across as nervous and insecure, but there was something "stellar" about her that started to excite viewers, especially after astute packaging enhanced her beauty and appeal, complemented by her exceptional singing voice.

In time, Taylor and Katharine emerged as a study in total active contrasts. He was a down-home original, she was a star in the making; he was all heart and energy, she was the epitome of cool and sophistication.

Idiosyncratic

By fight, the new American Idol should be a star, as that would dip the tilt in favor of Katharine. But, idiosyncratic Taylor excited viewers more, possibly because they could relate to him, and felt that he rang for them.

Taylor's experience also worked in his favor. At 29, he was the most senior singer in the finals, and the youth-oriented recording industry may have considered him too old to make it as a recording and component star. But, the show's viewers obviously disagreed, and with their millions of votes, made him their new choice.

In one dark way of reminding record and concert producers that "manufactured" and "jumpedup" stars are OK, but the talents who really excite the viewing and listening public are those who reflect a personal connection with their audience, a "kin connect" that makes below-the-looks and age irrelevant.

Vision

The huge number of votes cast in this year's grand finals indicates that Taylor and Katharine's respective styles of fare were all-out to support them. The fact that Taylor was proven that more people voted from the heart, from America's Heartland. And that's uniquely right, because Taylor Hicks is ...all heart!

NOW SHOWING

'X-Men' franchise in crackling finale

By Rito P. Avila

"X-Men: The Last Stand"
Dir: Brett Ratner
Cast: Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart, Famke Janssen

ARE YOU WILLING TO change who you are to find acceptance? In Brett Ratner's crackling, fast-paced adaptation of the X-Men's "Dark Phoenix" saga, when a "cure" for mutancy is discovered, mutants from all over the world are confronted with issues of identity, racial diversity, alienation and lust for power.

For the first time, Eric Lehsherr's ally Magneto (Ian McKellen) and Charles Xavier's (Patrick Stewart) genetically-gifted followers are given a choice: To retain the uniqueness that isolates and alienates them or give up their powers to fit into a world that fears and despises them.

Millionaire mutant-baby Warren Worthington II (Aldrich Hughes), father of the ill-fated winged Angel (Ben Foster), spearheads the development of the "cure" for mutants like his son who he finds jittery (his Lexah (Kaniehtiio Horn), the young tavern of the outdoor, fire, the drug can only be possessed—and exploited—from the long reborn Magneto sees it a threat to earth's current population.

Together with his group, the Brotherhood of Mutants, Magneto recruits the confused Jean Grey (Famke Janssen), who is "resurrected" after sacrificing her life to save her teammates in "X-Men 2," to get rid of Jimmy.

Now in full control of her telekinetic and telepathic powers, Jean emerges as the most powerful mutant there is—even mightier than Professor X and Magneto combined!

But...does Jean allow her tremendous power to control her? As the comic-book adage repeatedly courts us: With great power comes great responsibility—such constant lure, it's easy to get overwhelmed by it.

On matters, the social conflict: On film proves to a classic comic-book case, but the existential issues that this particular storyline reads aren't really so different from those that besiege the social and political landscape of the times we inhabit.

On point of action and entertainment, Brett Ratner delivers. Although not as cerebral nor as smooth as Bryan Singer (who left Marvel's lucrative movie franchise to do "Superman Returns," which had to scrub another director when Ratner quit the project), Ratner pulls no punches—from the jaw-dropping special effects (see the Golden Gate bridge fly etc.) to the overdone outburst pounding explosions.

Ratner even manages to execute some affecting dramatic scenes between Wolverine, Cyclops (James Marsden) and Jean Grey. Similar to his last movie, however, nothing to scroll in.

The movie's special effects aren't as jolt-aboil, and some lines are hokey and cliché-ridden—as if the writers filled time from a

(MORE ON A2.)

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3 THE DA VINCI CODE
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
5 X-MEN 3
6 THE DA VINCI CODE
7 POSEIDON
8 OVER THE HEDGE
9 THE DA VINCI CODE
10 THE DA VINCI CODE

ERMITA

1 X-MEN 3
2 POSEIDON
3 SLITHER
4 X-MEN 3
5 X-MEN 3
6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
7 OVER THE HEDGE

METRO EAST

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 X-MEN 3
3 POSEIDON
X-MEN 3
4 THE DA VINCI CODE
5 OVER THE HEDGE
6 X-MEN 3
7 X-MEN 3
8 THE DA VINCI CODE

NOVALICHES

1 POSEIDON
2 X-MEN 3
3 THE DA VINCI CODE
4 X-MEN 3
5 THE DA VINCI CODE
6 OVER THE HEDGE

CITISQUARE MALABON | **PIONEER**

1 X-MEN 3
2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE
1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 X-MEN 3
3 OVER THE HEDGE
4 THE DA VINCI CODE

STA. ROSA | **LIPA**

1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 OVER THE HEDGE
4 X-MEN 3
1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 X-MEN 3
5 X-MEN 3

DASMARINAS | **ANGELES**

1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 X-MEN 3
3 X-MEN 3
4 THE DA VINCI CODE
5 OVER THE HEDGE
1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 OVER THE HEDGE
4 X-MEN 3

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2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 OVER THE HEDGE
5 X-MEN 3
6 X-MEN 3
1 THE DA VINCI CODE
2 THE DA VINCI CODE
3 POSEIDON
4 OVER THE HEDGE
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6 X-MEN 3

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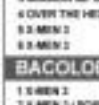

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Murder mysteries on Hallmark Channel

THIS JUNE, THE Hallmark Channel presents "Murder [illegible] Murders," based on a bestselling Canadian novel, the presentation's clues exhilarating stories are set in 1880.

MONTAGE

They reside around a principled young detective (Peter Outerbridge) who uses his innate ability to sift through a mountain of data to solve a number of cruel murders. Cocasse

OUTERBRIDGE (WITH FLORA MONTGOMERY, LEFT), Taylor "Detective Murdoch Mysteries."

Julia Ogden Stanley Hansen] helps him piece the evidence together and come up with the killer's identity.

Solace

The Scissor band performs cuts from its "Never Easy" debut album on June 2 at (M. Megginell), June 3 at 360 Bistro, June 16 at 900 Mobius, June 23 at 900 Bohemia, June 23 at 900 City Cinema, and June 28 at 900 North Edsa. The current single, "Never Easy," is currently getting good radio airplay.

Hot new video

Being dials and sellers with "Helpless," a heavy video that reaches the hot and fiery exhibitor's arc—so tone your body to boost your love life. Featured dancers are sexy Hadadees Gwen Garci, Myka Hernandez and Jazzlogue.

'X-Men: The Last Stand'

"Opening Night" on Star Movies tomorrow at 1:25 p.m. presents exclusive scenes from "X-Men: The Last Stand," directed by Brett Ratner and starring Patrick Stewart, Halley Gammer, Hugh Jackman, Ian McKellen and Halle Berry.

Also on Star Movies tomorrow at 1:35 p.m., "The Man with the Golden Gun" with Roger Moore as James Bond. And on May 27 at 10:35 p.m., "Action Legends: The Steel Cut."

'Benchwarmers'

On May 20, "The Benchwarmers" premieres at Cinema 4, in cooperation with Jack TV. Producer Allen Jardin's comedy is about three losers (Rob Schneider, David Spade and Jon Heder) who form a three-man baseball team to challenge a full squad of elementary school bullies.

Movies on TV

On HBO, May 27 at 1:35 p.m., "12 Monkeys." May 28 at 9 p.m., "Shark Tale." May 29 at 8:30 a.m., "Harry's War" May 30 at 7:40 a.m., "The Sea Wolves." May 31 at 11:20 a.m., "Enemy the Beginning."

On Cinemax, May 27 at 9:30 a.m., "Missing in Action." May 28 at 1 p.m., "Phenomenon." May 29 at 8 p.m., "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." May 30 at 9 a.m., "Single White Female." May 31 at 6:15 p.m., "Feel for Love."

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Filipino movies feted in Shanghai

By Bebs Cervantes

I WAS EAGER TO ATTEND Shanghai's First Filipino Film Festival in the Chinese city once referred to as the Paris of the East. I flew to China with Angelo Castro Jr., Maryo de los Reyes, Mark Gil and Elwet Barkers.

Our group arrived one day before "Magnifico" opened the filmfest at the Cathay Theater. Maryo and Mark were justifiably proud of their first little film that has garnered 36 awards in international film festivals.

"MAGNIFICO." Has won 36 awards at various international film festivals.

Selection

Aside from "Magnifico," the selectees included Lauriza Guillen's "Tanging Yaman," actress Esther's Yong Pagkakalinga ni Gloriosa Oliveros," Mark Meily's "Crying Ladies," Jeffrey Jeturian's "Milyon Dr" and Olivia Lamasan's "Milan."

On opening night, the festival drew a sizable crowd. Naturally, we felt proud that the movie was appreciated for its message, acting and direction. The theme of good winning over evil touched viewers.

The success of "Magnifico" and other recent "Iyche" films hints at the future of Philippine cinema. These independent films concentrate on drama and story rather than star appeal and boxoffice elements.

Contemporary

Philippine Consul-General Jesus I. Yabes expressed hope that "the Chinese people will learn more about our country through contemporary Filipino films." Director Maryo, president of Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, lauded the festival for highlighting the "traditional friendship between our people that goes back to ancient times."

Ambeth Ocampo, chairman of the NCCA, shared that he requested the festival to strengthen ties between the two nations.

I asked Maryo how he thought the festival fared as a cultural event. He shared: "The organizers should have maximized our presence by facilitating more exchanges of ideas between the Chinese audience and the Filipino artists."

Discussions

Since our film artists had already taken time out from their busy schedules, the festival organizers could have set up more discussions between Chinese students and our film people.

Maryo and Mark could have discussed current trends on contemporary Philippine cinema, resulting in a substantive understanding of Filipino filmmaking.

GALPO BEPOSO. Sponsors celebration of art and music for the second year

'Pintahan at Musikahan'

TODAY AND TOMORROW, 15 musicians along Tiramisu Street, formerly Bonny, will gather to celebrate art and music through "Pintahan at Musikahan sa Nayon." This is the second year Grupo Beposo is joining the festivities.

Three visual artists will paint a mural on the wall along the Poblacion premises of Beposo. French films will be screened at the Alliance Francaise de Manila.

Visitors

An festival Saturday Time will be put up for visitors who wish to try their skills in painting and music. Guests can have their portraits done by visual artists.

Those will also be a series of lectures at the Rizza Bonjo Gallery of LRI Boutique Plaza. Dr. Eric Zerrudo will talk about "The Beautiful Trees Along Beposo St." From 3 to 4 p.m., while Guillermo Gomez will discuss "The Beposo Area of Spanish Watercolors" from 4 to 5 p.m.

From 5:30 to 10 p.m., a musical production will feature the Chalen group, the University of Makati Chorale, the Malolos Ensemble, and the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band.

Performers

On May 28, from 5:30 to 10 p.m., performers include Lizie Salvador, Gilbert Sanchez, the St. Scholastica Chamber Music Quartet, Cebu Bohjan and the group, Cantemos.

E-mail jmendozacastro@yahoo.com, or call 899-1567.

STREET SMART

Manuel Navarro

Art, music at Pundaquit fest

CASA SAN MIGUEL FOUNDATION in San Antonio, Zambales concludes the 12th Season of the Pundaquit Festival with a day-long festivity featuring visual arts, dance and chamber music today.

Concert

The event kicks off with a dance concert featuring renowned dance artist Alyza Bernardo and her group, Dance Revolution, interpreting a contemporary work titled "Today for Manila."

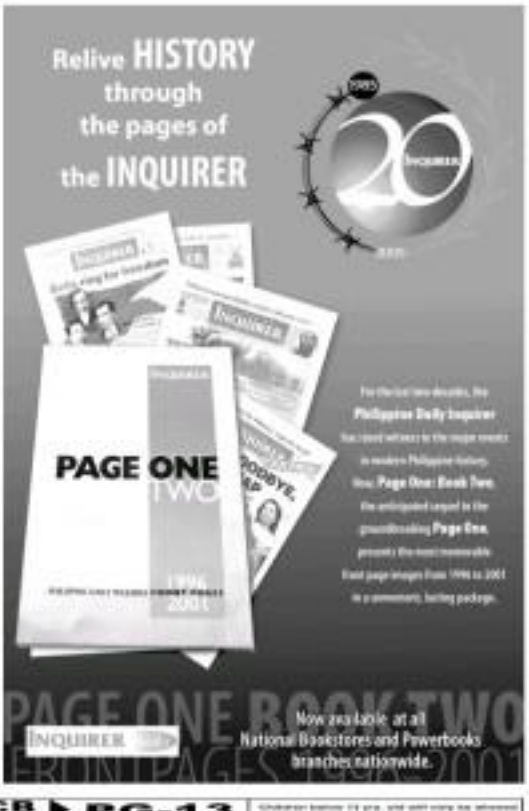
A memorial mass and concert will be held in observance of the first death anniversary of Ricardo R. Rodjuna, patriarch of the Rodjuna family of artists.

The Pundaquit Virtuosi, the resident children's string ensemble of Casa San Miguel, will play classical chamber compositions. Also Mendelssohn's Octet, along with selections from Tony Bennett and other crooners of the '50s.

Residency

Finally, young sculptor Jim Cooray Siew is also occupying his first solo installation there. "Myself as Adam After the Big Bang," at the Sessions Hall in celebration of his residency at Casa San Miguel.

Call 925-8837 or text 0920-964-8320.



'X-Men' franchise . . .

from page A3-1

book of quotations and asked the actors to deliver them earnestly.

But lines notwithstanding, the movie nevertheless finds its heart in the involved performances of its actors.

Anderson, for one, shows the inner turmoil of Wolverine when his character has to choose between love and duty. He is stripped of his indifference when beloved friends and colleagues give up their lives for their cause.

Also, the intimate sketches about the personal lives of our cast characters show a touching montage of suppressed sadness and a sense of alienation as results of discrimination.

The characters that haunt these memoirs—whether good or bad— are disturbing "issues" that also mirror our fears as human beings, as we consciously search for acceptance and understanding in the world we live in.

POSTNOT — BY BILL AMEND

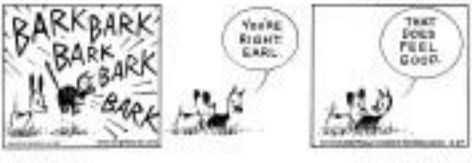
A LITPIX — BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN — BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGGLE BABY — BY MA. JUNICE

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

HUTTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL



ATOMO AND WEBOY — BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PANALIGAN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a creative boy quiet who expresses your talents in an original way. You often introduce new methods, new styles and new ways of doing things. You're both sophisticated and witty. You avoid rude excesses (inflexible in whatever you pursue. Do your wildest plans, you will get home and family first. Watch hard this year to build and maintain relationships important.

Birthdate of: Isadora Duncan, dancer; Jason Oliver, TV chef; Jeremy Mayfield, NASCAR driver.

DAILY CROSSWORD

MISHMOSHES — BY JOHNIE TEJOO

BEH — BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE — BY MARK ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

TULDOK — BY RAFLAND "BEHAM MAMBLING

"SLITHER." Creepy, campy—but fun.

Homage to slime and gore flicks

By Noelani Torre

WHO SAYS HORROR FLICKS CAN'T BE fun? Certainly not first-time director James Gunn, whose directorial debut claims to be both a horror movie and a comedy.

If you're familiar with films like "The Thing," "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," "Night of the Living Dead," and practically anything by George Romero, John Carpenter, and David Cronenberg, you'll probably recognize a lot of the elements present in "Slither."

There's the slimy alien life-form that arrives on a quiet Southern town via meteorite. The obnoxiously gross way that the life form goes about invading humans (bodies and reproducing in them). Lumbering zombies, a slimy blonde, and a bathroom scene with a cute twist.

Tongue-in-cheek

If the aliens-invade-a-sleepy-redneck-town story and all of the abovementioned sound like they've been every B-horror movie you've ever seen, that's because they are. That is where the comedy is, in the conscious and very campy-in-a-dumb sort of those genre conventions.

"Slither," in fact, looks like the work of a man who obviously has a genuine love for this kind of fare. Gunn, who wrote the script for the highly praised 2004 remake of "Dawn of the Dead," is a self-confessed horror geek, and this movie is his homage to the films and gore flicks he cut all of us might love, but which are ultimately horror.

If you're a fan of the genre, you'll enjoy the fact that the film is peppered with references to earlier flicks. Non-fans may not get all the in-jokes, but will still enjoy the crazy mix of creeps and laughs. But if you don't enjoy seeing a lot of blood and guts, you may want to skip this since "Slither" is an unabashed gruesome.

Small town

The film is set in the small town of Wheeler, a down-place populated mostly by hicks where things are so boring that the cops spend their time monitoring the speed of passing whipporwills.

Then, atom-wants the alien-carrying meteorite, a ship-like alien invades local millionaire Grant Grant (Michael Rooker of "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer" fame), pets and nerds start getting mutilated, and the local beauty and Grant's wife Starla (Addison Elizabeth Hanks) notices that her husband's meds is coming out to be more than just an allergic reaction.

Police chief

She is rescued from her mutilated husband (who is coming into some sort of squid) by police chief Bill Pardy (a wonderfully dead-pan Nathan Fillion), and pretty soon the only uninfected people left in town are the cute ones (Tania Saulnier) and the foul-mouthed mayor (Gregg Henry).

It's drawn, campy and generally dumb, but it's also smartly handled, with actors who turn in serious performances (bet they had a lot of fun), and pacing that's only a few gaps away from being completely bewildering.

Loving . . .

Proverbs 4:3-4

I never knew how difficult this job was until I tried it myself. Mixing cement and gravel was easy at first—but try doing it for more than five minutes and your back will hurt!

Our third visit to the construction site was for the bricklaying stage. Julius joined our group and he enjoyed the experience as much—lifting bulkier bricks and laying them with precision.

Our fourth visit to the site was to run out—are painted the two-story house with the family's choice of color—light lavender. The activity because even more special because the GK front surrounded us.

Then, it was time for the ceremonial incorporation—a ceremonial procession for all of us. The Garcia family gave a very simple, touching message of thanks, and we thanked them in turn. Helping build their house was an experience that nourished our souls.

The Bayanihan spirit is alive in the very concept and vision of building a GK house. Ming Manuel is a GK Metro Manila volunteer to build his neighbors' houses. Now, with God's grace, he and his whole family have a house they can proudly call their own.

I went back to visit the Cortez family last January when I accompanied my good friend, Jo Vida Soto, her daughter Glenda, and the kids staff to Sitio Baby. They are a dozen houses beside the home of Ming Manuel. It was Jo Vida's gift to others on her birthday. Glenda also did the same on her natal day last April.

Last week, Julius and I were again at Sitio Baby, to judge a contest to contest empowering the youth and making them discover their own potentials. For us, GK is not just about building a house, it also means building lives—and character.

Thank you, Terrence and Pauline Uson, Gin-gin for Christ dance head for GK Sitio Baby; Sonny Ramos, project director of GK Sitio Baby; and his wife Chona; Norlie Mendoza, local GK area coordinator of Sitio Baby, and all the good people of Sitio Baby. You have anointed our lives, and your beauty is our spiritual growth!

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Loving hands that build

By Tinnie Barcelo-Bobon

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED moving in and out of homes too frequently and having no real permanent address? As a young girl, I did.

My earliest memory of eviction was when I was four years old. It was a small apartment in Cubao. We had no choice but to move out because my father had a falling out with his siblings.

The next years, my parents, my sister and I lived a nomadic life...living in apartments in Cubao, Mandaluyong, Marikina, White Plains, Greenhills, Loyola Heights, etc. We must have lived in more than 25 apartments and houses in my lifetime!

AUTHOR (right, center) and friends in the GK house they helped build.

Reasons

There were varied reasons. Most of the time, we were living in dire straits. When my parents said everything from country club-dilemo to the home we are living, we lived in cramped apartments. When they obtained space, a gold mine selling coconut candies, we moved to a 3,000-sqm. corner house with a swimming pool in Greenhills.

Then, the business went bankrupt. We sold the house and moved to a smaller home. That was in 1987...I was 17 years old. So the next seven years, the cycle of transferring homes continued. One night I told myself, this is it. Someday, I will buy my own house and it will be my permanent residence.

So, when I married running my own money between 1993-1996, I took a leap of faith, and acquired a loan for a house which I personally called mine...bought with my blood, sweat and tears.

I only moved once of that house when I married and moved to my assigned home with Julian. My mom and brother still live in that house today. It is my gift to them.

It is because of my past that I dreamed and helped build a house through Gawad Kalinga. Last year, on my 35th birthday, I celebrated my high school best buddies day: the GK house would be the perfect testament to our 22 years friendship. They all agreed and contributed money. I took care of the rest of the project cost.

Volunteer

Thanks to my "Bingaslang Umaga Squad" on-line, Bernadette Santiago, who is also a GK volunteer, I got in touch with Ann Santos, GK Head for Metropolitan, who furnished me with a list of families whose house I could sponsor. I chose Ising Manuel Cortez' family in Rapuwalo Village in Sitio Baby Sariwon.

The day I met the Cortez family was also when their house was going to be demolished, to give way to a new one. I could not believe a space which measured a mere 20 sqm. would fit 16 people!

Ating Debs, the sister of husband, told me that they would sleep in a sitting position to fit in the old bamboo bed.

Interiors

The interiors would get flooded, and when the water level rose, all of them would just climb onto the bed and stayed there till the waters subsided. Almost daily underneath their charpoal "house" was, to say horror, their toilet bowl. Simply put, this wasn't the kind of home the Cortez family deserved.

That Saturday was an emotional day for them—they were going to say goodbye in the house they have known to have been many ups and downs. Rr, they were all thankful. Finally they would have a decent place to live in. They would no longer be considered squatters.

We all joined hands and closed our eyes in prayer. Mission Into the "demolition team" composed of GK volunteers pummeled away at the house we considered livable.

My friends and I donated free wedding gifts to the couple. The building process. We were there during the "pahinak" stage—

(CONTINUED ON A-5)

Montano's 'Sabina' goes onstage at Merk's

By Rocky Pil, Ulticrics

IT WAS IN 1958 WHEN RAZY Cruise-Project began her career as educator and stage artist at Ateneo Theater. She assisted Dr. Severino Montano in founding the first community theaters and she was responsible for co-establishing the Ateneo Education and Theater Arts program of the Philippine Normal University.

Dynamic force

"Doreen can be a dynamic force in the community. In private practice, in the academe, in television and small but her forceful, yet soul a sense of pride in our cultural heritage, and dedicated teacher, great lioness," she explains.

In 1989, Mary formed the Philippine Cinema Company and began presenting plays in her living room. She staged plays in the home of Engineer and Mrs. Leo Montano, in the gardens of Ayala Alabang, in the basketball court of Baguio University, and in the sprawling Rustic-by-the-Sea area known as the Among Filipino Sala Theater.

The PDC is an outgrowth area of the Children and Teachers

ROGERS. Presario claims to derive inspiration from great literature.

Theater of St. Scholastica's College and the University of Sto. Tomas Santisimo Theater.

In celebration of the 43rd anniversary of Ateneo Theater, Rogers is directing "Sabina," the one-act play adapted to Montano's short work.

Sabina is the story of a barrio lass who falls in love with a foreigner, who turns out to be a married man. It stars Rio Perez, Archie Adamos and Jose Helbers.

Presented back-to-back with "Sabina" is the hilarious comedy "Why Women Wash the Dishes," starring Ike Tolosa, Rico del Rosario and Lola Castillo.

Rogers draws both plays, which run at Merk's Bar and Bistro today. Call 756-1811.

Child-sensitive TV ales support Funship

THE ANIME TV FUNSHIP SAILS today with a trip to Boracay and Subic hosted by Regina Henriquez and PLDT.

Supporters

Corporate supporters of child-friendly television like Columbiana, UBC, Planetarium, Goldilocks, Jollibee, Yellow Pages, Dr. Pepper, Jollibee and Cebu Pacific will offer stage games, raffles and fun activities to make the overnight voyage memorable and unique.

The undertaking is a crowd way of calling attention to the national campaign for responsible television viewing.

PLDT will launch its Smart Text, which subscribers on board will be texted with Goldilocks anime, fun-

ly periods at the various luxurious staterooms cycles from Cyberbuff to, while Spinelli/UBC will provide Nickelodeon and beauty products to lucky patrons.

A drop-wide logo liner will be emblazoned by Regina Henriquez and Amoranto, while snacks and drinks will be distributed by Chinapaint, Uno Pendleton and DSC.

Programs

The event continues on land at the Nuna de Anda in Boracay, where the Anak TV Seto for "Is nuclear safe" is scheduled to determine which stars and programs on Philippine TV are best-loved kind.

An Anak TV screening will be held on board the 400 by Sweetheart cruise and its voyage from Subic on May 28.

Gift of nature

WHAT IS NUTRITIOUS, DELICIOUS, ORGANIC AND CHEAP? All sweet potato (kamote) leaves!

These leaves are rich in chlorophyll and minerals such as calcium, phosphorous, iron and potassium. They are an excellent source of vitamins A, B and C.

Unfortunately, many people are not be interested in them because they have not yet "discovered" the secret value of using this wonderful gift of nature. We'd like to share them with you.

LOTUS POND

R. Valenciso and N. Bismonte

Wrappers

Fist, sweet potato leaves make amazing wrappers. Choose large ones, wash them well, and make different types of fillings. Use fresh leaves to wrap them into little rolls. They are rich sight at the edges, and look like *Lumpiang shanghai*.

Some fillings you can put inside include:

1. Ground pupaya with grated ginger, kalamansi juice, crushed peanuts, minced garlic and salt.

2. Meat mongo sprouts (sigue) with thin strips of sweet potato and onions sautéed in sesame oil and salt.

3. Fried rice with ripe ramps, black beans and garlic.

4. Steamed rice with toasted sesame seeds, steamed strips and soy sauce.

Second, steam the leaves and then, add vinaigrette like apple cider vinegar, olive oil, garlic, sugar and salt. Heat, serve with fresh tomatoes.

Third, soak the sweet potato leaves in evaporated milk. Spice it up with black pepper, ginger and salt.

High heat

Fourth, you can heat oil, sauté some garlic, add the leaves, and cook on high heat for a few minutes. Then, shift to low heat and add grated coconut and chopped green peppers. Don't overcook. Remove from heat, and mix in 1 cup of lemon or kalamansi juice.

Fifth, you can use the leaves to make soup. Use tomatoes butter, dip the leaves, and fry that with sweet and sour sauce.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Fitch exec says rating upgrade not likely soon

By Doris C. Dumlao and Michaela V. Nonoy

RP revenue-to-GDP ratio 2nd lowest among 98 countries

LONDON-BASED FITCH RATINGS IS NOT LIKELY to upgrade its outlook on Philippine sovereign credit rating any time soon as lingering concerns on the government's revenue collection over the medium-term outweigh recent progress in fiscal reforms.

In an interview at the sidelines of the ACI World Congress in the Philippine International Convention Center, visiting Fitch Ratings senior director and head of Asia sovereign ratings James McGannon said the current rating of BB— or two notches below the coveted investment grade—was still "appropriate" given the existing fiscal weaknesses and recent fiscal gains.

Fitch Ratings' outlook on Philippine government credit is currently "stable" but the government hopes for a revision to "positive" by some of the major global rating agencies to mark journeys to early next year. A "positive" outlook indicates a potential credit rating upgrade within a year or less.

While the government's fiscal position was seen as a "positive" trend, the Hong Kong-based sovereign analyst said it would take much more than meeting revenue collection targets from the value-added tax reform to shore up the sovereign credit grade.

"It has to do with medium-term issues, raising the revenue further and raising revenues relative to GDP (gross domestic product). Here [in the Philippines], it's the second lowest among the countries that we rate and we rate 98 countries. So it's pretty much a

PETCH B2

ePLDT to buy 100% of SPI Tech

By Dinelo L. Lucas

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE Co. (PLDT) added another company to its growing service portfolio by acquiring one of the biggest business process outsourcing firms in the world.

In a statement, the country's largest telecommunications firm said it had authorized its information and communications technology unit, ePLDT Inc., to acquire 130 percent of the SPI group of companies.

SPI is the second largest "pure-play" business process outsourcing (BPO) company and the ninth biggest independent BPO service provider in the world.

"On May 26, SPI Tech L.P. the parent company of SPI, formally accepted the letter of intent submitted by ePLDT for the acquisition of 130 percent of SPI," the company said.

No price has yet been set for the transaction. PLDT said it would use internally generated cash to fund ePLDT's acquisition of SPI.

"The seller has granted us exclusivity period within which to conduct due diligence on SPI and complete the transaction," PLDT said.

ePLDT has engaged investment banking firm Credit Suisse as its independent financial adviser for the transaction.

The acquisition of SPI, together with its existing Philcom call center group, will help solidify ePLDT's position as one of the major telecom-led BPO companies in the industry, the company said.

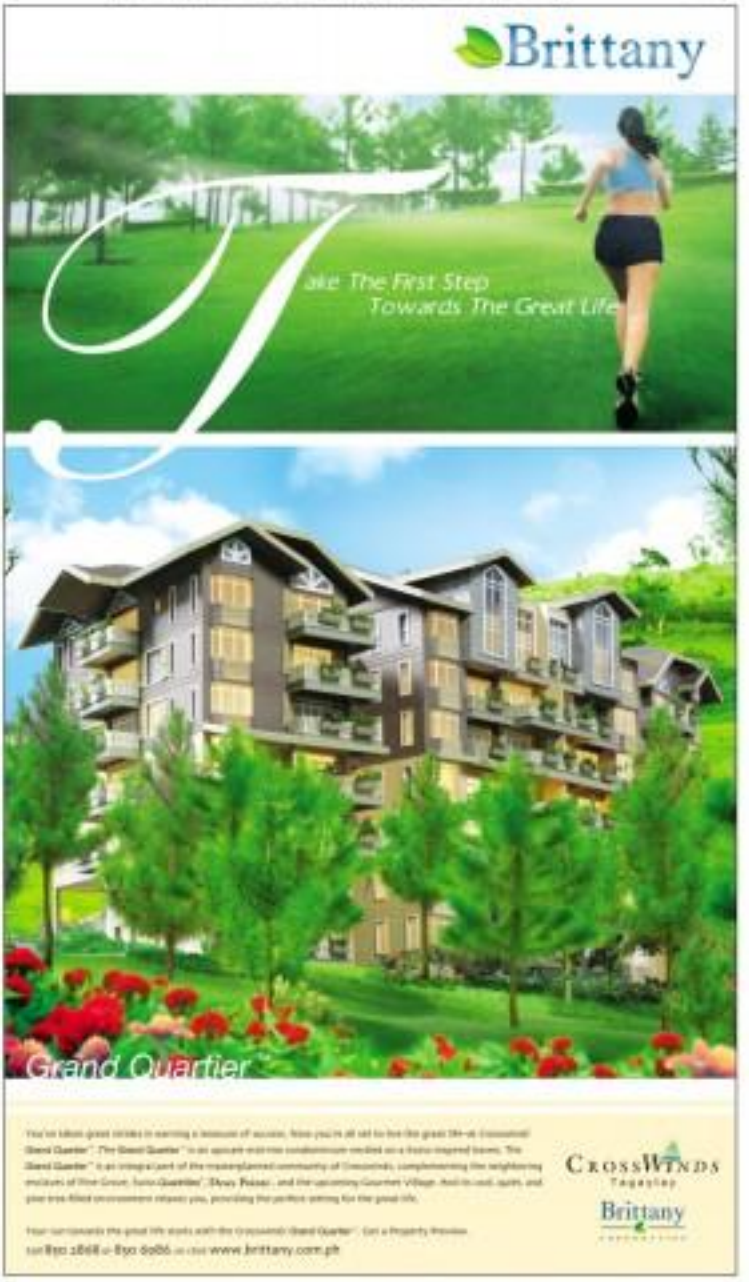
"It will enable ePLDT to benefit greatly from the forecast growth in the BPO sector," the company added.

"The additional SPI revenue ePLDT will broaden our participation in the promising BPO sector, which industry analysts forecast to grow at a

EPLDT B4

Shares close 3.2% higher

WHAT'S INSIDE
RP gets Japan grant for microfinance sector B2
BOI drums up investor interest in the provinces B7



RP gets Japan grant for microfinance sector

By Michelle V. Perez

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT has agreed to provide the Philippines P990,000-worth of grant to help develop the country's microfinance industry and make it more useful for households and small businesses.

The grant, approved by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR), will be administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

It will be used to develop the capabilities of cooperatives engaged in credit and savings operations and make them comply better with regulatory rules. It will also help enhance the capability of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) in monitoring the operations of cooperatives nationwide.

"Improved access to efficient microfinance services can help the poor smooth their consumption, operate their risks better and build assets," Hiroki Imoda, ADB financial sector specialist, said during the signing of the grant held at the Japan Institute of Finance last Thursday.

"The challenge is how to provide access to sustainable microfinance services for the more than 1 million households in the Philippines that currently do not have access," the ADB official said.

Imoda said the grant would complement the $150 million worth of official development assistance recently approved by the ADB for the Philippines. The $150 million will fund the Microfinance Development Project, which also focused on building viable microfinance institutions and strengthening supervisory capacity of the CDA.

The National Credit Council, a coordinating body headed by the Department of Finance, was tasked to be the implementing agency for the microfinance development project.

The grant for the Philippines from Japan comes despite earlier talks that the Japanese government was considering to suspend the provision of assistance to the Philippines following the failure of the Philippine government to promptly pay tax refund claims of Japanese companies in the country.

DOF officials had said that the issue was being addressed as some tax refund claims had already been released.

The grant for the development agency of the nation's most industry followed the Arroyo administration's directive to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to help small- and medium-sized enterprises as a strategy to boost economic growth.

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BSP seen raising rates

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS is likely to raise interest rates by another notch, most likely by half a percentage point (50 basis points) in the second semester, to make peso-denominated assets more attractive given a global meltdown in emerging market portfolios.

During the opening of the 402 World Savings Day here, Governor Rafael Buenaventura, in an interview with reporters, hinted another rate hike. Financial market experts predicted that the BSP would have to tighten monetary policy soon to nudge up peso-denominated government bond yields given the negative differentials and the fact that rates had fallen too low versus similar benchmarks.

The peso has given up most gains against the dollar this year and moved closer to the $1:P55 barrier alongside regional weakness triggered by prospects of higher US interest rates.

In a session on post-Greenspan interest rate regime at the Bankers Institute, experts expressed mixed views on whether the US Federal Reserve's series of successive tightening was over. But as far as Asia was concerned, the Philippines is seen among those under pressure to bring up local bond yields to prevent capital outflows.

Michael Gavin, Deutsche Bank's chief economist for Asia and head of global market research, said the relatively low interest rates suggested that "capital flows would be very high." Ignacio predicted that the BSP would have to raise its overnight rates by 50 basis points to prevent capital flight.

"I'm looking at two 25 basis point hikes in the third and fourth quarter and maybe switching it to the beginning of next year," Ignacio stressed.

"I don't think part of their concern is the relatively low level of interest rates which is unique to real terms if you look back to a very long and very low relative to US dollar yields," he said.

Andrew Freris, chief economist and head of fixed income research at BNP Paribas, said Thailand is likely to follow India had announced to raise interest rates and would likely be the first to raise by the fourth quarter.

He said the Philippines and Taiwan would be among those under pressure to likewise raise interest rates later this year. He said there was a widespread misbelief that the peso would be an inferior exit currency during the BSP's policy rate-setting next week.

Most foreign exchange traders present during the AIC World Congress agreed with the two foreign experts' assessment.

AIC World Congress organizing chair Jose Arnulfo Veloso, treasurer at HSBC Philippines, said: "If currency speculation persists due to emerging market sell-off, then the BSP may be compelled to arrest the peso decline. It only has to influence rate push, I don't see it."

"If the BSP will raise rates by 50 basis the assessment will be 50 basis points for the year ere, maybe the fed moves over 5.3 percent all one," Veloso explained.

Shares ...

From page B1

Volume hit 1.712 billion shares worth P1.79 billion. Gainers beat losers 86 to 33, with 36 stocks unchanged.

The all-shares index rose 37.36 points to 1,827.41.

"The market staged a technical recovery in line with the rise in global markets," said Lawrence de Leon of Armed Capital Equities.

"However, I think we will continue to see volatility in the near term largely because of renewed developments, particularly concerns about rising interest rates as the US and worldwide commodity prices," he said.

Metrobank's Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) led the index, rising P60 to P2,610.

Apex Land Inc. advanced 71 centavos to P12.79 and its parent, Apex Corp., rose P7.50 to P407.50. Ayala Corp. and Bank of the Philippine Islands rose to P515 to P513.50.

Food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.'s A shares were steady at P113.5 and its B shares were unchanged at P76.

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Margonong
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Invisibility cloak soon a reality?

WASHINGTON—Imagine an invisibility cloak that works just like the one Harry Potter inherited from his father.

Researchers in England and the United States think they have hit on the clue. They are laying out the blueprint and calling for help in developing the exotic material needed to hide in a cloak.

The latest are special nanoscale materials, unlike any in nature or the Potter-in-a-cloak of Whitehall and Wizardry. These materials are intended to steer light and other forms of electromagnetic radiation around an object, rendering it as invisible as something tucked into a hole in space.

"Is it science fiction? Well, it's theory and that already is not science fiction. It's theoretically possible to do all these Harry Potter things, but we're starting to take a step to our engineering capabilities," said John Pendry, a physicist at the Imperial College London.

Details of the study, titled Broadband cloaks, appear in Thursday's online edition of the journal Science.

Scientists not involved in the work said it presents a solid case for making invisibility an attainable goal.

Metamaterials

"This is very interesting science and a very interesting idea and it is supported on a great mathematical and physical basis," said Sailing Hughes, a professor of electrical and systems engineering at the University of Pennsylvania. Researchers here share his enthusiasm for invisibility using newer materials called metamaterials.

Pendry and his co-authors also propose using metamaterials because they can be tuned to bend electromagnetic radiation in directions that render light, for example, in any direction.

A cloak made of these materials, adds a scanner designed down to the submicroscopic scale, would render other objects out cast a shadow.

Instead, like a river running around a boulder, light would, all other forms of electromagnetic radiation would strike the cloak and simply flow around it, continuing on as if it never bumped up against an obstacle. That would give an onlooker the apparent ability to see right through the cloak, with everything behind inside revealed from view.

18 months away

"Yes, you could actually make someone invisible or long as someone wears a cloak made of this material," said Donald Burnett, a Northwestern University physicist and design engineer at Chelsea Microwave Corp. in Bolton, Massachusetts.

Such a cloak does not exist, but early versions that could work microwaves and other forms of electromagnetic radiation could be as close as 18 months away, Pendry said. He said the study was "an invitation to come and play with these new things."

"We will have a cloak either not too long," he said.

The Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency supported the research, given the obvious military applications of such stealthy technology.

While Harry Potter could even his cloak to dash around Hogwarts, a restricted version probably would not be something just to be thrown on, Pendry said.

"To be realistic, it's going to be fairly thick. Cloak is a misnomer. 'Shield' might be more appropriate," he said. AP

2 drugs can help prevent breast cancer

By Charles E. Rohde

RALOXIFENE IS AS EFFECTIVE as tamoxifen in reducing the risk of breast cancer in postmenopausal women at increased risk for the disease. This is the result of the recently completed five-year Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene (STAR), the largest North American breast cancer prevention trial undertaken.

Since 1998, tamoxifen has been the only drug available to reduce breast cancer risk. However, tamoxifen also triggers menopausal symptoms like hot flashes and slightly increases the chances of certain diseases, including uterine cancers, blood clots, strokes and cataracts.

On the other hand, raloxifene (developed by Eli Lilly under the brand name Evista) was approved in 1997 for the prevention of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. Researchers took a second look at raloxifene after studies showed that fewer women who took the drug developed breast cancer compared to those taking a placebo.

Fewer side effects

The STAR trial showed that both drugs reduced the risk of developing invasive breast cancer by about 50 percent, but women who took raloxifene daily had 36 percent fewer uterine cancers and 29 percent fewer blood clots than the women who took tamoxifen.

Also, initial results from the STAR support other studies that show raloxifene has the risk of developing a stroken, at tamoxifen does.

The final results of the trial, involving 19,747 women in more than 500 centers across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico, will be known later this year.

Significant step

Dr. Gita Lana, a senior consultant at the PGH-Dr. Jhanson Reyes Medical Foundation and a breast specialist, considers the STAR trial a significant step in the country's fight against breast cancer.

She pointed out that the Philippines has one of the highest incidence of breast cancer in all of Asia.

"Based on estimates from previous, the trial, would now have a choice of two breast cancer risk-reduction drugs.

Nakalimot mail nanatiling buhay is a class of drugs known as selective estrogen receptor modulators, or SERMs. Lana said these drugs achieve the positive effects of traditional estrogen therapy, including stabilizing bone mass and improving lipid profiles, and avoid the negative effects like increased risk of uterine cancer and breast cancer.

Car of the future

EUREKA!

Universal V. Lee-Chua

WITH RISING GAS PRICES AND environmental destruction, there is an impetus to develop cars that consume less or none at all, possibly solutions. Toyota has its ultra-fuel hybrid Prius, and now Daimler-Chrysler has fuel cells. The latter technology is almost too good to be true. Imagine driving a Mercedes Benz, no less, and emitting only water vapor. It's powered by hydrogen, which can be stored in fuel cells that are used to power the motor. Voila! The only inference produced in this entire process is water, so most accurately, water vapor. What if cars that had no oil driven to, daddy more efficient than conventional petrol engine?

30 prototypes

Last April at The Loft at Bayfront Towers, GMA Movies and Daimler-Chrysler held a symposium on respective technologies. They have the right to be proud. Since the 1990s, DaimlerChrysler has been researching on fuel cell technology and around 30 prototypes have been made, including buses.

In 2003, the auxiliary Fuel Cell Power from the German and Latin word for ordinary) displayed its innovative way to store hydrogen—not from gas tanks but pressurized directly from methanol. Methanol, a volatile liquid at 1 atm, like WEGAS 3, a fuel cell running on methanol, set a long distance record by covering the EUA berry San Francisco to Washington, D.C. in 2004, of the Ocean's International Motor Show, the Jeep Commander concept model have the fuel cell can power a vehicle with the electric motors and less critical drive.

Reliable fuel supply

Fuel cells are rapidly being adapted to road the world. Since 2003, 60 cars have been submitted to tests in everyday operation with selected customers in the EUA, Europe, Japan and Singapore. In 10 European cities and some other cities in Australia, more than 30 fuel cell buses are already in operation plying their usual routes. In Hamburg, the company Hamburg Hochbahn has already been using a fuel cell System exhibit since 2001 to deliver purchase. UPS did the same in 2004.

The catch? A reliable fuel supply infrastructure must be built, and more innovations be done to make the cars affordable to the public.

Layne is now an intrepid part of the Daimler-Chrysler operation.

Early morning BP surge risky

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

CONTRARY TO WHAT MOST people think, blood pressure generally increases in the early morning hours just before one wakes up and is maximal around mid-morning. It then gradually decreases during the day and even dips at night when one is sleeping, before it surges during the early morning hours. This is called the normal diurnal pattern of the BP.

The early morning surge, as Dr. Lucito Lorbis says, doing it has been identified as the culprit behind the increased incidence of strokes and heart attacks, even sudden death, in the early morning hours.

Recently published studies in elderly patients suggest that hypertension in the morning hours is a strong, independent predictor of future heart attacks, and that has been shown to a greater risk than having sustained hypertension during the daytime.

A morning surge in blood pressure has also been identified as a better predictor of stroke than chronic rises in the BP at night.

Excessive dipping of the BP when one is asleep is also associated with stroke risk when followed by an excessive BP surge in the early morning hours before waking up. Doctors usually see hypertensive patients to check their BP upon waking up and before they take their medicine of their BP-lowering pills. This gives the physician an idea of the BP control and the condition during the early morning hours.

In problematic cases, the physician may even request for a 24-hour BP recording through a device which measures the BP intermittently even while one is asleep.

Normal pattern

The normal diurnal BP pattern seen in healthy normotensive individuals reflects the falling of the BP during the night and rising during the early morning hours prior to awakening, abnormal diurnal patterns are: (1) the "nondipper" type of the BP at night ("nondippers"). Nondippers usually have more damage to the vital organs, including the brain, heart, and kidneys. The risk is even higher when the BP during sleep is actually higher than during the waking hours, and this group has been called "risers."

Dr. Kanzo Hoshi of the Jichi Medical School in Tochigi, Japan, and his colleagues have identified another subtype of diurnal diurnal variation. These are the so-called "extreme dippers, who have a higher frequency of both silent" (no symptoms) and clinical brain disease which subsequently took up in strokes or early decline in mental function called dementia.

Extreme dippers may also have an exaggerated morning surge of the BP. They have also found that many have the worst stroke prognosis, and extreme dippers are at no intermediate risk.

70% of strokes

In the study researchers found that 70 percent of the strokes occurred between 6 a.m. and noon in those with a significant early morning BP surge, compared with 41 percent in those without the early morning surge—a dramatically significant difference.

Yet extreme morning surge was an independent predictor of stroke in elderly patients with hypertension," Dr. Kazu concluded. He added that although in their previous work, they showed that extreme dippers are at no increased risk of stroke, a BP control mechanism may actually be the morning surge, rather than excessive low blood pressure during the night.

Dr. Kazu speculated that this early morning BP surge may trigger platelet stickiness or hypercoagulation leading to the formation of blood clots inside the arteries.

So it's best for hypertensive patients who exercise early in the morning to take their their antihypertensive pills as soon as they wake up and allow some time for it to take effect before doing strenuous exercise. Hypertensive have to make sure also that whatever drug regimen they are using is one that can control be able to control up to the early morning hours until their patients take their next dose.

Dipstick assay

DISCOVER

Maxine Santos Ballon

IT'S LIKE AFTERNOON TEA MAKE INTO your favorite coffee shop, order your beloved large soy latte with extra shots of espresso, and must wait hours. Suddenly you realize that you're not sure if the barista confused your order with that of the person who came after you and ordered a decaf latte. You snatch into your pocket and pull out one of the little colored sticks you keep handy, moistened only once in your cheek, pull it out to note the color change, and then head back to the counter, your suspicions verified.

This seems to be one scenario imagined by researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis (WUSM). It's interesting enough that clusters led and Ruth Ladenheim from the Division of Laboratory Medicine have filed patents on this so-called "dipstick assay" for commercial use. Jack Ladenheim was also lead researcher of the paper that drew scientific interest in the method which the patent is based. The paper appears in the June 1 issue of the journal Analytical Chemistry.

Cannibis

The science behind the caffeine assay is worth mentioning because of the results involved. For the dipstick assay to work, Ladenheim et al. needed to find caffeine-specific antibodies that could withstand high temperatures. Experiments showed that such antibodies were found in rabbits exposed to caffeine-protein conjugates. Rabbits were chosen as the animal of choice because they are relatively easy to raise and produce large amounts of antibodies.

Ladenheim et al. got these from the Washington University Medical Center and Saint Louis University and two Ethiopian camels named Hercules and Apollo in the zoo.

Their environment made the project rarely international effort.

To produce the desired antibodies, the animals were injected with small doses of caffeine over several weeks. Each of the llamas and camels consumed approximately half a liter of blood-rich with the desired antibodies.

The researchers separated the antibodies and tested them for stability at various temperatures. Some of the caffeine-specific antibodies, specifically those from two Ethiopian camels, were found to be able to withstand temperatures as low as 95 degrees Celsius.

When these antibodies were used in a trade version of the dipstick assay and tested against urines established and incontestable caffeine counts, Ladenheim et al. found that their antibody test was just as accurate.

Tea, chocolate

Also worth noting was that the llama's caffeine-specific antibodies could distinguish between caffeine and caffeine-like chemicals such as theobromine and theophylline, which are found in tea and chocolate. This meant that one would not be misled by a positive result for caffeine when it was actually caused by similar chemicals in the beverage.

"Now that we've solved the sequence of this stable caffeine antibody, we can produce copies in the lab... [and] we don't need to rely on the animals," Ladenheim noted. In a WUSM press release.

So, Barista, Virtual, Inn Sakuda, Hercules, and Apollo: thank you for your blood. You've made a memorable and valuable contribution to science.

The caffeine-dipstick test may or may not eventually make it onto supermarket shelves. Once it does, it may offer benefits to everyday coffee drinkers in other, more subtle ways. However, the product ultimately does to the market, perhaps the researchers will reward you with immortality by naming the test after you. At the very least, you can truly hope that you already given you an extra dose of grain.

BDO shelves merger plan for now

Banco de Oro this year expects to post net income of ₱3.1B

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BANCO DE ORO UNIVERSAL Bank of mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr. will assess its merger with third largest Equitable PCI Bank first, by next year, before it puts on the table all foreign offers, BDO president Nestor Tan yesterday said in a press briefing.

Tan said that BDO is still willing to talk about plans concerning Equitable PCI Bank—now dominated by the 186 Group—if shareholders are open to the proposal.

He stressed however that "this was not a [formal] offer" for a merger.

"At the moment, yes, we are abandoning our proposal to merge BDO shares for Equitable PCI shares," Tan said. "Our strategy now is to talk to our clients. We're willing to talk, but there is no offer at the moment."

Tan yesterday admitted that other shareholders of Equitable PCI have not looked favorably on BDO's merger proposal.

"We put in more than P1 billion in [Equitable PCI], and we can't just forget about it," Tan added. "Our long-term plan is still for consolidation. Other shareholders don't want it. In the meantime, we have put [the merger plans] in the backburner and focus on organic growth."

Tan said the bank expects to grow its net income to P3.1 billion this year from P1.94 billion in 2005 despite anemic loan growth.

Growth will largely be driven by deposits, the expansion of its branches via acquisitions of branches from recently acquired United Overseas Bank (UOB), as well as income from fees.

BDO has recently completed the integration of UOB into its wing, which has resulted in the growth of the number of branches to 234.

Following the acquisition, BDO will have expanded to reach to include key provincial areas such as Baguio, Batangas, Dagupan, Davao and Iloilo.

According to Acosta's briefer, Alonzo, Vega and Industrial underwriters are for SME development, the Land Bank of the Philippines led the list of GFIs when it offered a total of ₱3.7 billion in loans to SME clients. The Development Bank of the Philippines followed with ₱3.1 billion in loans. The others were the Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency (Philexim) with some ₱62 million, the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. (SB Corp.), with ₱829 million, the Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp. (Quedancor) with ₱52 million, and the National Livelihood Support Fund (NLSF) with ₱13.9 million.

Alonzo said that with the first quarter loan figure, a total of ₱93.28 billion has been offered under the SME Unified Lending Opportunities for National Growth (Sulong) Program.

The program aims to provide SMEs with easier credit access.

"That should be able to translate into half a million jobs, roughly the same as last year," said Alonzo, who is also chairperson and chief executive officer of SB Corp.

For the first quarter, according to Alonzo, 676 SMEs were given technical assistance on product development in order to join trade shows, including the National Trade Fair, Turismo Furniture Show, Fashion Week and Go Negosyo Summit.

"With the product innovation, we were able to record that some ₱19 million has been earned by participating SMEs during the National Trade Fair alone," she said.

Another program the government is pushing is the One Town One Product-Philippines (Otop-Philippines) Program.

The program aims to promote entrepreneurship and create jobs. It also encourages the country's micro, small and medium enterprises to produce and market distinct products or services using indigenous raw materials and manpower.

Through Otop-Philippines, local government executives will take the lead in identifying, developing, and promoting a specific product or service which has a competitive advantage.

Filinvest sets aside ₱4.5B for key projects

THE GOTIANUN-LED FILINVEST conglomerate has set aside roughly ₱4.5 billion for key projects of its major companies this year, said Josephine Gotianun-Yap, Filinvest Development Corp. president.

Following ownership's stockholders' meeting of the group's property arm Filinvest Land Inc. (FLI), Yap said the group this year would spend about ₱2.5 billion for information technology-related developments of Filinvest Alabang Inc., ₱1.5 billion for commercial projects of FLI, and ₱500 million for FDC's seaside project in Mactan, Cebu.

In addition the planning demand for IT office spaces, Cybernoss Properties Inc., the facilities provider of SM has started construction of Plaza A, a six-storey building with a leasable area of 15,000 square meters at the Southlinks Cybercom in Alabang.

Plaza B is expected to be completed by June this year. Located in the same locale as Plaza A, the second quarter this year, a third building will be built.

FLI on the other hand plans to launch new middle income residential projects this year, such as The Haze at South Park in Laguna, Spring Heights 2 in Quezon City and Filinvest Parkside in Laguna.

The Filinvest Group is also developing what it hopes will become Cebu's premiere seaside residential estate on a 12-hectare seaside property, dubbed Seascapes Resort Town. This will be scheduled for launching in 2007.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Aboitiz eyes more efficient ships as fuel costs dampen financials

By Dexter L. Lusaya

THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST commercial shipping line is dropping its core vessels to cut down on fuel costs amid the high price of crude oil in the international market that has further widened its losses in the first quarter.

The board of directors of Aboitiz Transport System Corp. is now evaluating several refitting proposals, according to by chairman Jon Ramon Aboitiz, shortly after he attended the company's annual meeting.

"So far, the only decision we've made is to ... rationalize [operations] and look for more fuel-efficient vessels," Aboitiz said. "[As to] what type of vessels, that is still being studied at this time."

In person, the company operates a total of 14 vessels—11 in its SuperFerry fleet plus three in its Cebu Ferry line—which are already some of the most efficient and youngest commercial ships operating in the country.

ATSC's vessels carry a mix of passengers and cargo to destinations nationwide.

With a downtime rate of only 0.001 percent, Aboitiz said the company's efficiency level can already be considered "world class."

"In a vehicle, we have plenty of choices usually," he said. "But you have to keep in mind that however efficient your vessels are, with fuel cost at $70 per barrel, it has an impact on your bottom line."

In the first quarter of the year, ATSC posted a net loss of P192.4 million from loss of P167.2 million in the same period in 2005.

Aboitiz emphasized that the company is now looking for ways to save on fuel on top of merely buying more fuel-efficient ships and retiring less efficient ones.

"We're looking at different ways of becoming more efficient in order to negate the cost increase that we've had in fuel," the ATSC chairman said. "It's very hard. Anybody who's in the fuel intensive business is having difficulty."

Where ATSC's fuel costs stood at only 25 percent of total revenues, it now stands at 29 percent due to rising fuel costs.

He said, however, that the company's good cash flows have helped it weather the storm, giving it enough elbow room to even realize its debt burden.

"We're reducing our debt," he said, adding that the equipment was financed more externally, generating cash. "Our cash flow is extraordinary now P500 million."

During the stockholders' meeting, the ATSC board also approved an option to convert preferred shares to common shares to increase its capital.

WORLD'S LARGEST
Servicemaster, the world's largest cleaning and pest control company, held its first international conference in Manila last month. Among those who attended the event are (from left to right) Col. Domondonova Duplaya of ServiceMaster Philippines; Jim Wessell of ServiceMaster USA; Bülent Mahi, vice president of ServiceMaster of SA; Bruce Graaten of the Embassy of the United States; Atty. Gilberto Bravo, president & CEO of ServiceMaster Philippines; and Fred Strickland, vice president of Terminix USA.

GFI loans for SMEs reach ₱7.9B in Q1

By Christine A. Gaylican

GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INstitutions (GFIs) in the first quarter issued some ₱7.9 billion in loans to small and medium scale enterprises employing an estimated 95,335 Filipinos nationwide.

According to Acosta's briefer, Alonzo, Vega and Industrial underwriters are for SME development, the Land Bank of the Philippines led the list of GFIs when it offered a total of ₱3.7 billion in loans to SME clients. The Development Bank of the Philippines followed with ₱3.1 billion in loans. The others were the Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency (Philexim) with some ₱62 million, the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corp. (SB Corp.), with ₱829 million, the Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp.

Fitch exec says rating upgrade ...

From page B1

the bottom of the barrel," he noted. The lowest was Costa Rica's, he said.

"(Growth in revenues) is happening but at a slower pace compared with other countries," he told reporters. He added that while revenues today could translate into above 20 percent of GDP, revenue-to-GDP ratio in the Philippine is maintained below the benchmark.

The Philippines' revenue-to-GDP ratio stood at 14.5 percent in 2004 and only slightly improved to 14.8 percent last year.

The Philippine government has kept its cash budget deficits within target since the start of the year and even chalked up a budget surplus in April of ₱19.1 billion, but short-term is shrouded in the uncertainties of the main tax agency Bureau of Internal Revenue.

The April budget surplus stood five-fold higher than the ₱3.6-billion surplus seen in the same month of 2005, while the deficit for the first four months of P80 billion was below the ₱60.1-billion deficit in the same period of last year.

"In terms of overall revenue efficiency we still have lingering concerns on the way the government is achieving that (fiscal target). It's more through spending restraint, which is a very good thing but last year increase revenue which we still continue to consider a fundamental weakness, it's actually disappointing, to be honest," the Cormack said.

"We really love to see the gains coming forward to be more on the revenue side rather than the expenditure side," he stressed.

McCormack stressed that he was not suggesting any further increase in tax rates or those rates—such as on the VAT and the corporate income tax—seem to be nearly comparable with other countries in the region.

"But the efforts that are underway to increase collections need to be stepped up, followed up and more readily used to our purposes rather," he said, stating the need to see more tangible results in reducing tax evasion and avoidance.

He said there had been a lot of "fanfare" in the campaign to prosecute tax evaders but this would have to result in actual improvement in revenues.

Over the medium term, he said reducing the deficits through expenditure cuts would not be sustainable given mounting spending pressures.

"So if the revenue is not there, either the deficit goes up or the spending doesn't happen and that has implications for economic growth and overall economic picture," McCormack said.

He said Fitch Ratings had assessed in its current ratings that the Philippines would meet its VAT collection target, as it would take much more progress in fiscal consolidation to merit an improvement in the ratings.

Among the three most influential global credit rating agencies, Fitch Ratings keeps the highest rating on Philippine sovereign debt at two notches below investment grade and Moody's, at four notches below investment grade.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE
(as of May 26, 2006)

Stocks	Open	High	Low	Close	Volume
FINANCIAL					
Asiasec Equities, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	10,000
Belle Corporation	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Bank of the Philippine Islands	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
China Banking Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Cebu Holdings, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Cosco Capital, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
First Philippine Holdings	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Globe Telecom, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Manila Electric Co.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Philippine Long Distance Tel.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Security Bank Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Union Bank of the Philippines	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
SERVICE, INDUSTRIAL & MISCELLANEOUS					
Alliance Global Group, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Ayala Corporation	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Ayala Land, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Bloomberry Resorts Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
DMCI Holdings, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Energy Development Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Petron Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
San Miguel Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Shangri-La Properties, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Universal Robina Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
MINING					
Atlas Consolidated Mining	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
OIL & GAS					
Global Source Petroleum	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Oriental Petroleum	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Pryce Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Cebu Holdings, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Shangri-La Properties, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
SERVICES					
Asiasec Equities, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Globe Telecom, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Philippine Long Distance Tel.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Cebu Air, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
Philippine Airlines, Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1,000
HOTEL & CASINO					
Bloomberry Resorts

Exporters optimistic, look to sustain growth

Demand for electronics rising in Asia; weak peso helping

OPTIMISM AMONG PHILIPPINE exporters is growing after recent signs of improvement and it's not just down to strong global demand for electronics, the country's main export.

Increased investments, fuelled by demand from China and a more favorable economic landscape all suggest exports are starting to make a break from the past—as long as government and industry seize the opportunity to lock in the gains.

"I would like to believe this is the onset of a trend and most export forecasters are making such," said Sergio Ortiz Luis, president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation.

Exports in the first quarter climbed 15.8 percent from a year earlier.

March's annual rise of 20 percent was the biggest for a single month in 1 1/2 years.

In the last six years, the Philippines has seen its share of total Asian exports decline.

In 2005, its share was less than 2 percent, the lowest in Asia.

Economists said a pick-up should be seen in the context of strong demand for electronics that is boosting exports across Asia, with the Philippines having a long way to go toward maximizing its growth.

But they added there were many reasons to be hopeful than six months ago, including a weakening of the peso.

The peso has fallen more than 3 percent since May 8 to almost 51 per dollar, and this could provide some comfort to Philippine firms that have suffered from currency strength in the past years.

The value of exports—which also include garments, vehicle parts, coconut oil, fruit and wooden furniture—is equivalent to about 40 percent of Philippine gross domestic product, so a sharp pick-up would mean a significant boost to the economy.

Arthur Yong, president of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc., said growth in semiconductor exports could double in 2006 to more than 15 percent.

Electronics, largely assembled from imported parts, comprise up to one-third of total exports.

An investment in electronics plants, growth in exports should follow, Yong said.

Spending on expansion by electronics firms in the Philippines was expected to continue an uptrend this year after rising 76 percent to $776 million in 2005 and 63 percent in 2004.

"If you look at the past performance before, it was because investment was low," said Yong.

"2006 has started well because investment is strong."

Yong, also chief executive at Fil-Technologies Inc., a maker of power conversion chips, said his firm would likely invest $3 on 8 million this year to expand its facilities, up from $1 to 3 million last year.

The Philippines, like its Asian neighbors, faces tough competition from China's low-cost, mass-production base.

For example, in late 2004 Japan's Toshiba Corp. closed its Philippine laptop computer facility and moved it to China.

But China also offered opportunities for exporters.

Orrin Luis pointed to Chinese demand for Philippine agricultural products.

Firms in the garments sector were adjusting to Chinese competition and other companies were also providing support services to foreign businesses, he said.

"Five years ago, we were hardly moving anything to China, but in the last two years our average growth rate in exports to China has been between 50 and 70 percent," said Orrin Luis.

Economists said the Philippines still needs to do much more, including widening its export base and improving infrastructure.

One risk is that the country's export mix is dominated by the same kind of electronics products that China excels in producing.

The Philippines supplies about 10 percent of the world's semiconductor manufacturing services needs, including mobile phone chips and micro processors.

"The Philippines is concentrated in one sort of chips," said Jesus Rabindranauen, economist for Asia-Pacific at Global Insight in London.

"If demand gets diverted from this one technology the Philippines is producing, this could represent a major risk."

Peter Wallner, president of consulting firm Wallner Business Forum, said the Philippines should develop niche areas such as mining and agriculture, and invest more in English language skills, if it wanted to attract foreign firms.

"Mining is an advantage. China has huge demand for minerals and is showing interest in the Philippines. It would be silly to ignore this," he said. "We are seeing all the right signals."

THE PHILIPPINES is trying to go beyond merely assembling semiconductors and other electronic exports and enter the high-value stage of designing and inventing electronics.

PNOC in talks with 3 firms on Palawan

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO. EXPLORATION Corp. (PNOC-EC) is currently negotiating with two foreign firms and one local company for possible farm-in agreements in two petroleum blocks off Palawan.

PNOC-EC president and chief executive Eduardo Manalac said the state firm was currently in talks with Australian firm TNP Oil Ltd. and Swedish company Lundin Oil Ltd. for a potential farm-in agreement in Service Contract 55 covering the West Balabac area.

"They're looking at the data. We're at the early stage of discussions with these firms," he said.

The area firm is also in discussions with Nido Petroleum Philippines Pty. Ltd. for another farm-in agreement, this time in SC 58 covering the West Calamian block.

Manalac said Nido Petroleum could likely have a 50-percent working interest in the petroleum block, should a farm-in agreement be finalized.

"Nido negotiations with PNOC for possible farm-in are well advanced," Nido Petroleum said in a presentation posted on its official website.

Nido Petroleum was "first" with PNOC-EC, he said, as the two firms already had an existing partnership to develop a petroleum block in an area in Southwest Palawan that the Department of Energy had previously awarded.

For this area petroleum block, which was included in the DOE's Philippine Energy Contracting Round 2005, the PNOC-EC and Nido Petroleum partnership was among the three groups given "priority consideration" due to its financial, legal and technical capabilities in developing the area.

Energy Undersecretary Guillermo Balce said in an earlier interview that the DOE should be ready to award the PNOC-Nido contract soon, maybe next this week.

Other groups given "priority consideration" were Singapore Global Asset Management Corp. for an area in Northeast Palawan and another in Southeast Palawan and the partnership between Kuwait Hol. and Wal-Mal Petroenergy Corp. for an area in the Sulu Sea basin.

ePLDT to buy . . .

Front page 61

compounded annual growth rate of 9.2 percent [over] the next four years," PLDT president Napoleon L. Nazareno said. "As the Philippines continues to gain recognition as a preferred location for BPO services, the PLDT group remains in the forefront as it continues to further developing this market in the years ahead."

ePLDT operates in 23 locations spanning North America, Europe and Asia, servicing more than 150 customers including many Fortune 500 companies. With over 8,500 employees worldwide, IPS services clients' contact centers, and three facilities in the Philippines, India, US, China and Malaysia.

ePLDT's main business lines include customer editorial and production, litigation support, coding and electronic data discovery, medical transcription, database structuring and management and transaction processing.

On the other hand, ePLDT's Vector call center group consists of Reliance Systems Inc., Rosale Systems Inc. and ePLDT Vector Inc. The ePLDT Vector group operates six call center facilities located in Makati, Taguig, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Quezon City and Iloilo, rendering primarily voice-based services to US-based clients and consumers.

RP posts $89-M BOP surplus

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES RECORDED A BALANCE of payments surplus of $89 million in March, bringing up the first-quarter surplus to $3.12 billion or more than double the surplus posted in the same period last year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

The BOP surplus for the month of March, however, marked a slowdown from the $107 million surplus seen in February.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

Net earnings, exports and remittances are considered as surplus items, while payments for imports and debt servicing are considered deficit items.

The surplus in March means that more money came in than went out.

Since the start of the year, the country's BOP has been supported by the national government's increased foreign exchange deposits with BSP from bond sales and project loans, the BSP's easy foreign exchange operations, inflows from foreign private investment and overseas Filipino workers remittances.

The BOP surplus was also in line with the surge in the country's foreign exchange reserves to a record high of $20.911 billion at end-April.

The BSP, for its part, took advantage of **the strong inflows by leveling up its gross** international reserves.

The CBN—consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund and foreign investments...indicates the country's ability to service foreign exchange requirements.

BOI drums up investor interest in the provinces

Nationwide roadshow kicks off in Cauayan, Isabela

By Rommel W. Dominguez

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS HAS embarked on a nationwide roadshow to reach out to micro and small enterprises as the government steps up efforts to promote business activities and job creation in the provinces.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez, who is also BOI managing head, said the campaign kicked off earlier this month in Cauayan, Isabela.

Hernandez said the BOI was able to process and approve incentives for a total of 12 projects based in Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya and Cagayan worth a combined P 160 million.

Expected to create 179 new jobs, the projects cover the sector of agar-agar tea and forest-based products, information and communication technology services, tourism, and health and wellness.

The biggest of the projects in terms of cost and jobs are rice-milled facilities of the Santiago City-based De Ocampo Medical Grocer and Bronze Drugs & Hospital Supplies, worth P29 million and P26 million, respectively.

De Ocampo project is expected to create 38 jobs while Bronze would open up 27 jobs.

On the other hand, Tradewise Fruitlife's P39.25-million food and agricultural products terminal would open up 106 jobs.

"Since the system for attracting foreign investments into the country is **not in place, it is now the time to gear** our efforts toward investment promotions in the regions," he explained.

The official said the approval of the projects was fast-tracked following the streamlining of the application process under the so-called one-day registration scheme.

Hernandez added that certain requirements were relaxed to allow micro and small-sized businesses to qualify for fiscal incentives, which include tax holidays and duty-free importation of capital equipment.

The government classifies businesses with assets worth up to P5 million as micro enterprises and those with investments P5 million and P15 million as small.

"Our drive campaigned, 'businesses need not be involved in the export market,'" Hernandez said. "Appliances need only to be engaged in the priority sectors listed in the investments Priorities Plan."

The 11 investment areas include agri-business, healthcare and wellness products and services, information and communications technology, electronics, motor vehicle parts, energy, infrastructure, tourism, shipbuilding/shipping, jewelry, and fashion garments.

Aside from these preferred activities, other areas included in the BOI are specifically required under existing laws.

Covered by mandatory inclusion are industrial tree plantations; iron and steel; basic products; exploration, mining, quarrying and processing of minerals; publication or printing of books or textbooks; and refining, storage, marketing and distribution of petroleum products.

Moreover, the BOI covers activities involved in the ecological solid waste management; the provision of clean water; those covered in bilateral agreements; and those involving the rehabilitation, self-development and self-reliance of disabled persons.

Lastly, Hernandez said the BOI can allow that the pre-registration requirement of publishing a notice of application to done through a local gazette or regional newspaper or through bulletin boards in municipal, provincial or city halls instead of a national publication with general circulation.

NTC set to lift ban on spam

By Dorin L. Lacsa

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORS MAY lift the moratorium on commercial text messages being broadcast over cellular phone networks by next month after it managed to iron out the most contentious issues with mobile phone firms and their content providers.

In an interview, National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) chief Ronald O. Solis said a finalized memorandum circular governing the use of so-called "text spam" may be released as early as next week.

"We will lift [the ban] once we issue the revised circular," he said, adding that he did not want any further delays that would affect legitimate commerce in the sector.

Solis explained that the new rules would distribute the burden of regulating text spam equally between mobile phone firms and their external content providers to eliminate finger-pointing between the two groups.

"We are pressuring them both to comply," he said.

Mounting complaints

To date, the NTC has received close to a thousand complaints from the public because of the viral spam.

Many complainants claim that they are billed for receiving unsolicited text messages and commercial broadcasts, while some complain of the inconvenience of receiving these messages, many of which are sent late at night.

When confronted with these issues by subscribers, telecommunications firms often point to their third-party content providers as the culprits behind the "violations."

Under the new rules, Solis said that content providers found violating the text spam guidelines may be blacklisted or suspended by regulators.

At worst, they will be permanently barred from doing business within the telecommunications system in the future.

"Telecommunications firms, on the other hand, will be penalized," the NTC chief said, although he added that the proposed penalty structure is still being finalized.

The remaining issue that needs to be ironed out is the hotline number which the NTC will set up jointly with the telecommunications firms to receive complaints from the public.

Universal number

On top of being a complaints hotline, the universal phone number will also be made available to members of the public who may want to verify the veracity of suspected "text scams" sent to them via their mobile phones.

Users will pay a small fee to access to the hotline number and the revenues from this operation will be shared proportionally between the regulator and the telecommunications firms.

Solis said that the fee is not meant to help the NTC make money but only to cover the administrative expenses of running a hotline operation.

Despite the fact that kinks in the hotline system have yet to be ironed out, Solis said he plans to release the revised rules by next week.

"I don't want this to be delayed only because of the hotline issue," he said. "We can provide a temporary hotline for complaints."

People, Events & Products

Edna Antes Espinosa

Celebrate summer with Gusto!

GUSTO, THE SHOPSITE GUIDE TO living life to the fullest, goes on a fun-filled summer vacation with its third issue, Summer Fun. With cool fun from the sense-smiling maidens Teresa Arrubio Bautista granting the iconic Shopsite treasures will soon be flocking to the country's best hypermart—as awarded by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Philippine Retailers Association to the recently held 2005 Connecting Hypermarket Summit—to get their fashion and Gusto!

The magazine screams all the summer essentials, and more, for home made ice-cream, sherbet and other cool-it-chillers. Check out Summer Stellar for easy do-it-yourself recipes. Dive for an enjoyable read! Dip or submerge oneself with the food, lifestyle and fashion features, Beach Bonding. And if the kids start asking the dreaded "Are we there yet?" question, don't fret, because the magazine has included a Trips for Trippy guide for tiny tots, and yuppified adults alike.

Planning a romantic picnic away from the city? Get some pointers from Sweet Summer Picnic for charming dessert getaways for you and your love to try.

Go sun: save the magical properties of the coconut in Coco love, and explore treasures lowly oil molasses have in Shine On. Also, witness a hot wanna bikini designer get an invigorating body and makeup makeover that "cures her from love-poser-younger in A New Hue.

Gustol also takes intervention a step further with Royal Highness, a pictorial on roses makeover tour: a consumer could pull off. And if you want to get to better shape, why not get one of the gym and fitness center reviews from the undercover lookey (The Super Gym Index). Or a low-impact summer activity by Gusto! recommends slashing your booty in an exquisite belly dance (Undulating Love Goddess). Both activities are sure to lead you fitter and more confident you.

Gustol is also valued to the best entertainment and technology offerings, from relaxing summer sounds and classic summer movies, Gusto! has the low-down on the happening days of the year. Gusto Zaha launches Musical, and a hop to Nokia's gorgeous Xpressur collection and iPod trends.

As every happy Shopsite member knows, summer Fun is best spent with Gusto!

Gustol is free to all Shopsite Wine-club members. Shopsite is located at Shopsite is located at the ground floor of the Harrison Plaza Mall, Manila, along the main thoroughfare of M.L. Quezon Avenue cor. Gen.Malvar and Arnaiz Avenue, Pasay City, at the ground floor of the Festival Supermall in Alabang, at the corner of Filinvest Drive and Vito Cruz Ext. in Makati, along E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Bagumbayan, Libis, and at the corner of General Aguinaldo and McArthur Avenues in historic Ortigas Cainta, Quezon City.

NATIONWIDE OBSERVANCE OF WORLD TELECOMMUNICATION DAY

In accordance with the mandate of the United Nations-mandated specialized agency for telecommunications and information and communication technologies (ICT), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Philippine government represented by the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) and the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) joined the private sector of the Philippine telecommunications and ICT industry in observing the 2006 World Telecommunication Day last May 15, and the National Telecommunications Week (NTW) celebration from May 15 to 20. The week-long celebration was highlighted by a two-day conference and workshops with the theme of MMX Digital for all Filipinos—recently held at the Bicol Hotel Nikko. Photo was taken after the speech of first event's guest of honor and speaker, Representative Vicente Veloso of Leyte, who was the ITC Chairman—for 9 years before he was elected to Congress. Shown are (from left): Benito Domingo Mapa, Commissioner, CICT; Ret. Kintanar, NTC Commissioner; Ronald Victor Dela, Renato Garcia, president, Philippine Electronics and Telecommunications Federation (PETEF); Telecommunications Office Head and DICT Commissioner Francisco Ferro; Grace Castro, president and principal consultant, ECCastro Consultancy Inc.; engineer Lydia to Marquez, NTC; Philippine Chamber of Telecommunications Operators (PCTO); and NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento. Not in photo is Dr. Of. Chun Ramon Soto who delivered the Keynote Speech but had to leave immediately after the morning session of the conference.

AMWELAI COURTESY CALL AT BSP

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor and Chair of the Monetary Board Armando M. Manapat, a Board member and formerly elected Bangkan Bayan Bulletin at the Sir Manuel Pilipinas Savings and Loan Association Inc. (AMWELAI) as its Chair Retired Col. Rosendo L. Bautista Jr. (right) receives the welcome being plaque donated by the non-AMWELAI Board of Trustees to facilitate their courtesy call on BSP officials at the BSP on (from left): BSP Sub-Governor Antonio Nakpil; Deputy Governor Nestor A. Espenilla Jr.; BSP Supervision and Examination Department III Director Fernando B. Zabella; BSP's Mona Cabrera; and AMWELAI President and Chief Executive Officer Col. Salvador S. Dimagmaliw. AMWELAI is the country's largest non-bank savings and loan association in the Philippines with more than 1*1 billion in resources and 34 branches all over the country to serve its more than 230,000 members nationwide.

Real Bank launches 'Tulong sa Kabataan' ATM Card

MARKING ITS 20TH ANNIVERsary celebration this year, The Real Bank, a fast growing Quill bank in the country, launches the first-ever ATM card that helps advocate environment.

Real Bank – "Tulong sa Kabataan" ATM account is not like any other ATM account. The card design features the winning art piece of Kenneth Bautista, a grade school student of Dolan Junior Elementary School in Quezon City who won first place in the "Tulong sa... Ilaw... Magaling, Magpiire" 2006 art contest. SCB Category II. (for grades 4 to 6 students).

A climax after opens a Real Cash "Tulong sa Kabataan" ATM account in any of the 24 Real Bank branches in Greater Manila, Cebu, Quezon City, San Juan, Makati, Bulacan, Pasig, Laguna, Cavite and Batangas effectively becomes a partner in nation building as the Bank donates an additional pesos to Real's behalf to the "Bata... Bata... Magtipid at Magaling!" Savings Advocacy Campaign, a project that was launched in July 2004 with the Department of Education as partner.

The Real Bank started the savings-advocacy campaign during its 20th anniversary in 2004 with the strong belief that teaching the kids the value of saving, thriftiness and the wise use of resources will help grow into better citizens that will ultimately contribute to nation-building.

Many years from now, this project has become very popular and was well accepted and recognized as it earned awards from the Asian Banking Awards 2005, the 2005 National Quality Awards and Quality Awards and the Global Excellence Award 2005. The Real Bank sees it that clients become active partners in this worthy advocacy.

MAGNIFICAT VENTURES' TOPPING OFF CEREMONY

Magnificat Ventures Corp hosts the Topping Off Ceremonies of the Shores of St. Thomas of the Child Jesus, the mentioned Center of Christ Jesus located in the Spiral Building (P), at Mindanao St., Alabang-Zapote, Pasay City. The ceremonies were led by the following top executives of the project: Jesus Sally Bautista, Jr., owner of MVC Investments; MVC Vice chairman of the board Sonia Bautista; VP and general manager of PDC (Manila—Steven Consultants & Management Company Inc.); Engr. Willie Rivera of the Military Ordinance of the Philippines; Rafael "Boyster" Bautista, president of MVC; Rodel Ramos, chairman/president of Pinas Systems Int'l Inc.; Ric Mendiola, construction manager of PDC; and Mario Martinez, VP marketing of MVC. The project's grand opening is tentatively scheduled in July 2006.

HOME MASTERCARD IN MERALCO'S 103RD YEAR

Part of the launch activities of the storied co-brand credit card in the market, Home Mastercard Cardholders are one of the sponsors in the week-long 103rd Anniversary and is employees Meral Celebration of Meralco. Home MasterCard had set up for one week a special selling booth for Meralco employees and their families at the Old Assistance Exhibit held at the main lobby of the Lopez Building. Shown in center of photo with the service crew at the booth are Meralco Fernando Sr., AVP and assistant treasurer of Meralco, being eagerly welcomed by Rolando Sanchez Jr., BDO consumer lending group executive vice president and senior bill and Board Fernando, Meralco financial services group of manager (extreme right).

MIZCOM LAUNCHES NEW CORPORATE LOGO

Since call it which is or imaging, but for communication (SP Mizcom), its new corporate logo designed and name Mizcom Communications (MizCom), are many signs of the escalating commitment to customer-needy remain the company's original advancement. The recent launch of its new corporate logo emulates Mizcom's dynamic character. From its conventional and monochromatic green logo designed in 1994, Mizcom changed its logo to a vivid and trendy designer hues of blue and green. This celebration of logos reflects the dynamism of Mizcom in adapting technologies to market trend and meet the requirements of its customers. Photo shown: (R) Lagoza, marketing consultant, presenting the new Mizcom corporate logo.

Campaign for responsible dieting

DIEHARD FAT CRAVE ADDicts... indulge. Dozens of the luscious, creamy and mouth-watering mozzarella cheese of pizza in your mouth... What about chewing and savoring the aroma read? But what about the subsequent binges-to-your body dangling like kangaroo pouch, eh? Or should you desire yourself to death?

Serious diet guru hand in hand with big responsibility and discipline. It seems to really achieve the ideal weight you want. If it is not taken seriously one is inconsistently and seriously putting herself/himself in danger of life long disease that is very expensive to combat.

One can safely go through the most common problems that owners right after gobbling paste of pills that even promise to give you a perfect 10 body. "Weight rebound" can make one gain back the previous weight in so much as 5-10 lbs or more. Worse, gain twice the previous weight.

The time of will prescribed, sees the wonder slimming pills and tonic brush diet is over. Dr. Carlos Pharma isn't too offer the very first weight management program here in the Philippines which advocates responsible dieting. Originating from Thailand, it flew its way to Indonesia, Saudi, Russia and now, the Philippines. Over 300 doctors nationwide through its affiliated hospitals and clinics are recommending it one for rarely patients but for prevention and long term enhancement such as diabetes, liver damage, stroke, cardiac arrest, heart disease and hypertension. The medically supervised treatment boasts of safety and effectiveness due to its weight trimming and stabilization periods where the client weight is monitored.

The Weight Management Program is a combination of traditional Asian herbs and modern pharmaceutical components that effectively cleanse the body and burn off unwanted fats. For inquiries about the weight program, consult with our nearest doctor, call 687-9262 local 30 or e-mail medinfo@carlos-ka.com.

IDP EDUCATION AUSTRALIA RECOGNITION AWARD

Warner Hill, lecturer in Engineering Computing, senior international officer of Charles Darwin University, receives his Australian Education International Administration Board Warder Engineering Management Air rights to Andrew King, director of IDP Education Australia/Philippines.

Fitness First Southmall opens soon

THE NO. 1 GLOBAL FITNESS company will soon open its doors south-bub in the Philippines. The new club will be located at the 2nd floor of SM Southmall Las Piñas and is the second to-Japanese the Bacoor area in the country.

Fitness First offers the best facilities, from the cardio theater, to the group exercise studios, to the latest strength training, core and cardio equipment, luxurious change rooms, saunas and steam. The new club also boasts of the Cloud9, where one can watch a movie while doing a cardio workout, and the Cycling Studio which features spin classic like Cosmic Cycling and RPM. It will also have a Kid's Club and Body Studio, a relaxing venue for Yoga, Pilates and Body Balance classes.

After an energizing workout, one can visit Body Care, a world-class health and beauty haven blending Western spa experience with a Cosmopolitan Asian flavor. Body care offers a full range of beauty and massage treatments including Thai aromatherapy, body wraps, slimming treatments and hand/foot therapy to complete a blissful experience.

Fitness First offers a Passport membership which allows access to over 400 clubs in Asia, Australia and Europe. You can also check out the website at www.fitness-first.com.ph for more information on its clubs in Alabang, Greenhills, 6788-CDM, Fairview, Fort Bonifacio, ROC-Makati, Eastwood City, Robinsons Metro East, Ayala Center Cebu, Ortigas, Manila and Fitness First Plus at SCBC Plaza. To reserve a pioneer membership at Fitness First Southmall, you may call 805-1000.

UBC: TEAZE AT THE BEACH

The long, hot summer brought many new ways for the country's luminaries to beach, faraway, to dream. One acted-getting event on the world-famous beach over Kuchin smaller one for the month of UBC's Teaze—The Green Tea with a Fizz. With more than hours of healthful tea drinks like cola, ice tea, lemon and raspberry, Teaze is the latest trend-refreshing beverage brought to us by the makers of C2 and is a perfect way to cool down in the hot summer months of summer. The Teaze Summer Fun Slam Challenge was a series of contests like first half right on the beach to celebrate the launch. UBC's signature Lemon Sodagreen and Lemon Tamarind along with treats and dramatic selection and a bevy of beautiful people attended the scintillating event.

Friendly digi-offers at Automatic Centre

SPORTSFEST OFFERS JOBS AT AUTOMATIC CENTRE AND DISCOUNTS & OFFERS

Under the season to think out a fun-filled and exciting promo exclusively for SM Supermall customers—the first ever ITS-based Sportsfest. Designed to draw younger shoppers who may want to experience ultimate and reasonable shopping experience this season, the promo is expected to be a night with unbelievable savvy and digital-inspired events with SM and Sugar's impressive line-up of state-of-the-art gadgets from Sony Ericsson and Jabra. Sportsfest Campus Chargers grads can also win more than ever value for your money. You'll definitely find everything you want all in one place. For details, please call 750-2816, 750-2822 or 751-3061.

AIM's Pre-MBA slated on June 3 to 23

AIMS—WASHINGTON EXPO CONSULTANTS SCHOOL IN BUSINESS (WES) is the AIM Pre-MBA Program slated to be held at the AIM Campus. It is a three-week, highly intensive orientation course designed for members of AIM's full-time MBA. The Pre-MBA is not open for undergraduate and entrepreneurs from all fields. It is also open to those without a background in business. Participants will undergo three eight-hour days of rigorous study and attend the class sessions, complete assignments, and participate in group projects. Classes will be conducted by AIM's top professors with decades of professional and academic experience. For more information on the Pre-MBA and other management degree programs of AIM, please call AIM's Students at 894-0001 to 88, 891-4011 ext. 208, 211, and 2000.

PRSP professional development seminar

LEARNING FROM THE MASTERS: COMMUNICATING IN TOUGH TIMES: A SEMINAR conducted by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) will be held on Wednesday, June 7, at the GMA Network Center, Timog Avenue corner Eden, Quezon City, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Registration is on going. Details about the seminar can be accessed at the www.prsp.ph. You can also call the PRSP Secretariat at 928-6502/6503/6512 or e-mail at prsec@info.prsp.ph / prsec@info.prsp.ph. Masters with proven track records in PR and related fields will share actual cases they handled and their experiences, insights and practical tips on effective communications and PR strategies. Early registrants get a 15 percent discount.

SASN celebrates 4th year

ST. MAGDALENE SCHOOL OF NURSING, IS CELEbrating its 4th anniversary this May and wants any of thanking its supporters in by giving away as much as 25 percent discount on all tuition fees. As a bilingual site for its anniversary, SASN will conduct its commencement exercises on May 28 at the PICC Plenary Hall, Pasay City. Over 1300 graduates of the different allied courses from NCR and Luzon provinces will attend this event. Whereas, SASN is also celebrating its Foundation Anniversary with Joint, SASN offers courses on Caregiving, Practical Nursing, Nursing Aide, and Medical Transcription and has 500 branches nationwide. For more information, call 373-3669 up to 88 locales 8001 and 8011.

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Manguerra

2015 PROJECTION

Retirement villages to earn $40B, generate 4M jobs

By Tessa R. Salazar

A DRAMATIC SHIFT in selected countries' demographics in the near future could bring in at least 859,000 foreign retirees annually to the Philippines. That number represents less than one percent of the 969.1 million projected retirees the developed world will produce between 2006 and 2015.

Partnering locally, a billion retirees looking for a place to spend the rest of their lives, the local retirement industry, especially property developers, are being urged to prepare for at least nearly a million retirees from Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, the United States, Canada and other European countries and even former Filipino or "balikbayan" with dual citizenships looking forward to spend the twilight of their lives back to their homeland.

Housing demand

The more participant entities in the real estate industry, is projected to have 859,000 housing demand either lease or purchase for the next 10 years.

The retirement industry is projected to hit the major foreign exchange earners at a cumulative $40 billion, with 4 million jobs generated by 2015, making the Philippines a major retirement haven in Southeast Asia for foreigners.

"We don't have a retirement industry right now. (REDA (Subdivision and Housing Developers Association) is spearheading the creation of the industry. It won't be work in a years, so we can't compete with Thailand and Malaysia—Part of the main destinations of retirees," said Raul Gonzalez, executive chief and director of the Philippine Retirement Industry. PRI is a private sector organization composed of real estate, healthcare and lifestyle group.

Industry blueprint

He added that the current tie the retirement industry culminating on July 1 to Alunga-La Hidalgo will create a blueprint for the retirement industry.

Government agency Philippine Retirement Authority and private entity PRI revealed that the effort underscore necessary for the influx of the retiree market are health and insurance facilities (24-hour clinics, hospitals, drugs and sickness services), 24-hour security arrangements and recreational, cultural and educational. And lots of transportation.

All these infrastructure and services, the two agencies said, could be integrated into a so-called "retirement village" so that members would have easy access to such services and facilities.

Gen. Rolando Agilipay chair of the PRA and executive are scheduled to present plans for the retirement industry to President Macapagal-Arroyo in Tuesday.

Big 5 developers

Jimmie Oshiro, incoming president of the PRI, revealed that initially ten groups has already sealed the "Big 5" property developers—Ayala Land, Cebu Land, Megaworld, Sy Ayala and Tan—to be part of the group.

Agilipay stressed that the first wave of retirees coming to the Philippines is crucial for the country's subsequent success in the retirement industry. "Ease, he said, it would be necessary to get the support of big names that have the reputation, experience and capabilities to produce what are needed for the retirement community.

"They have the credentialities, hospitals, banks, shares owned long that a retirement industry needs. It's just supporting what they have is to able to provide the total retirement services," he said.

Retirement 'hotspots'

Prospective retirement "hotspots" have been identified in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. These include Metro Clark, Metro Subic, Baguio, Nagaytay, Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Cebu, Bohol, Bacolod, Iloilo-ta, Davao and Cagayan de Oro.

Gonzalez revealed that the success for the demographic shift favoring the Philippines include positive payment necessary in developed countries amounting $1,000 to $1,500 per individual would be sufficient to live on in such countries. Totally support systems for older people are eroding, because of smaller families and a highly mobile population, and the worst ability of more migration.

Another objective that the group hope to achieve is the reverse migration of Filipino caregivers.

By 2025, the number of people aged 60 and over will be highest in Japan, Italy and Germany.

120-ha. retirement village

Meanwhile, a retirement village in Batang, Batan Isa, is in the planning boards as revealed recently by Jocelyn Ilar Gov Luis Chavit Singson to the Inquirer.

Over 120 hectares of rolling hills in Batang, or over near Ilgan, have already been surveyed.

"It will be retirement homes for old-hotel subsidiaries like Banana, Burmese and Taiwanese and then right at the centre of the community would be mall facilities—movie houses and supermarkets," Singson said.

Come to Brentville International and discover the art of fine living at The Masterpieces.

Here, you will find Madonna and Mona Lisa, our new house models meant for families with fine tastes in life. Each one displays the elements that make a work of art a magnificent success - elegance, superior craftsmanship and timeless appeal.

In cooperation with:

Members of The Ayala Group

Rockwell Kingdom

BRENTVILLE International Community
Mamplasan, Laguna
www.brentville.com

How to get there: Brentville International is only 10 minutes away from Filinvest Corporate City. From the South Luzon Expressway, take the Mamplasan Exit. Turn left from the toll gate and you will find Brentville International.

Come as we unveil the completed Masterpieces on May 28 at Brentville International from 10 am to 5 pm and take advantage of the free Boracay trip for four (4).*

For inquiries, call: 807-6907 · 807-5511

FILINVEST

*Must be employed in a job and documentary requirements are submitted

Renewable energy

MOST, IF NOT ALL, CONSUMED CURRENTLY rely on fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas for their energy. Fossil fuels are exactly that, fuels which means they are removed from limited sources that are running out and becoming too expensive or environmentally damaging to extract.

The most widely used of these fossil fuels would have to be oil, which is a derivative of petroleum. Petroleum is a complex substance formed beneath the earth's surface over centuries of many different materials being subjected to strong internal heat and very high pressures. The petroleum is then refined or broken down into petrol or gasoline, used in many smaller components, such as oil, plastics and asphalt, in the vast of human consumption of oil, however, the supplies of petroleum underground are rapidly draining, depleting, and the cost of oil prices are always going up. It is because the supply is decreasing while demand is increasing.

Coupled with its scarcity, the extraction and burning of fossil fuels contribute to global warming. In fact, fossil fuel-based electricity generation is the single greatest source of air pollution in countries like the United States. Power plants are the leading source of carbon dioxide emissions, a primary contributor to global warming. Burning fossil fuels may also cause cancer and other chronic health problems. There are degrades the valuable land and water resources from which they are extracted.

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Arnoldo de Jesus

Renewable energy

Faced with an impending scarcity of oil, the world is now turning—too slow, many experts believe—to the technologies and scientific developments that promise energy without the use of fossil fuels. The energy is called renewable energy which is any form of energy produced and rapidly replaced by natural processes. It is therefore sustainable and will never run out.

Benefits

Other than the primary benefit of renewable energy which is to practically unlimited supply, there are other advantages to be gained by switching over from the fossil fuels.

Renewable energy is non-offensive. After making a substantial initial investment on set-up, energy that produces renewable energy electricity costs will be cheaper in the long-lin.

Renewable energy forms

Fossil fuels need to be burned in order to produce energy. This causes harmful emissions and pollution that renewable energy sources do not produce. Instead, they usually involve natural processes that do not harm the earth or require plunging down a waterfall and doesn't warm pushing toward the land. Here are some forms of renewable energy:

• Wind energy

The sun heats the earth but the heat is not distributed evenly over the planet. The causes temperature and pressure differences which makes air move in the direction of lower pressure, and this is what we call wind.

Wind energy can be turned through the use of wind turbines. Wind turbines have rods connected to a rotating shaft in such a way that when the wind blows, the rods turn. The rotating movement then makes the shaft turn and this also increases the value of idle land.

• Water energy

Water energy is roughly a thousand times heavier than air. If the wind can create turbines, then we can make the same for water energy.

There are many forms of water energy but most of them use the natural movement of water, such as the tides, waves in the ocean and waterfalls just like in our Maria Cristina falls in Iligan.

• Solar energy

The sun's heat can be absorbed by photovoltaic cells inside solar panels. The heat is then converted into usable electricity. Also, the heat absorbed during the day can also be stored and used for heating at night.

It is becoming a common occurrence to see solar panels on roofs of houses for heaters and even on calculators because solar power is generally convenient for use in small quantities.

• Geothermal energy

Just as the Romans used naturally warm spring water for their baths, the temperature of water beneath the earth are also a source of energy.

Heat beneath the earth increases underground water's temperature. Examples of such are hot springs and geysers. The water here can then be turned into steam which moves a turbine, causing it to generate electricity. This sort of power is produced in our Tiwi geothermal power plant in Albay.

Biofuel

Biofuel is defined as any form of fuel that comes from organic materials. The best example of this would be wood. Wood is burned to provide heat energy and is still renewable because trees can be planted again to ensure a supply of wood for burning.

Liquid biofuel like ethanol and biodiesel is usually sourced from plants it can be mixed with gasoline to provide energy while minimizing the depletion of underground oil.

Biogas is gas released by organic matter that can be used for heating and electricity. For example, animal waste releases methane due to bacterial action. This gas can then be used to produce energy.

Renewable energy sources are still rare. They have many disadvantages that still need to be

WIND energy is collected by spinning wind turbines. It is a renewable energy source because it does not use up any resource that may be depleted after all. Instead, it has a practically unlimited supply of wind for it to generate power.

worked out. Unlike panels one only collects the sun's heat during the day and are usually expensive. Wind turbines can only turn when there is wind, and need to cover a lot of ground. However, they should be a welcome alternative to fossil fuels and consumers should do what they can to support the development of renewable energy technology.

For setting up renewable energy sources minimizes human energy consumption's impact on the natural environment, their extensive use should be a long-term goal for facilities. Only then will any resources be truly green.

Close encounters with nature at Anvaya

A MERE TWO HOURS OR SO NORTHEAST of Metro Manila, a community of kingfishers, owls and other exotic fauna are watched in their territory by a wealthy community of pathfinders and bon fishes, giant clams and sea turtles.

Drawing from these attractions above ground and beneath the sea, the Anvaya Cove Beach and Nature Club in Morong, Bataan, promises uniquely immersive nature experiences. The club, set to open this year will be one of the key features of a 220-hectare property of forested foothills that slope down to a 1.2-km-long beach of fine sand. Just 20 minutes from Subic Bay, the nature enclave that has managed to defy the more intense development visible in neighboring areas.

Manly Anvaya, project's operations manager of Anvaya Cove, said, "The club's most treasured assets are really its naturally beautiful features." Thus, the club's amenities and accommodations have been designed as centers of pavilions that blend in with the surroundings.

Distinguishing feature

Setting the tone for the development, the Nature Camp will stand out as the most community-oriented area. Unlike guests can only enjoy the sun's heat during the day and are usually expensive. Wind turbines can only turn when there is wind, and need to cover a lot of ground. However, they should be a welcome alternative to fossil fuels and consumers should do what they can to support the development of renewable energy technology.

For setting up renewable energy sources minimizes human energy consumption's impact on the natural environment, their extensive use should be a long-term goal for facilities. Only then will any resources be truly green.

THE 1.2 KILOMETERS of fine sand beach comprises the main core of Anvaya, the perfect venue for water sports and endurance adventures.

Prime living at Camp John Hay in Baguio

CAMP JOHN HAY IN BAGUIO IS fast becoming the destination of choice for families looking for a place to spend quality vacation time and those who are planning to spend vacations on a more permanent basis. Real estate properties inside the historic US era and renovation resorts have mushroomed locals, as well as foreigners, since it was opened to the public in the late '90s.

Real sellers are the Camp John Hay Manor and Suites Condotels, elegant residential homes such as the Country Homes and Forest Cabins, and the residential condo line. All of these are available on a long-term lease and a first come-first served basis.

Reasons for buying

Camp John Hay unit owners cite the resort's peacefulness, relaxing atmosphere, clean air and security as the main reasons for their decision to purchase and enjoy properties in the area. While traffic and pollution have become major concerns for Baguio residents, in Camp John Hay these problems are nonexistent.

The Camp John Hay Condotels such as the Manor and the Suites are the best picks of buyers because of their affordability and special benefits.

The Camp John Hay Manor has a total of 105 units while the Camp John Hay Suites has 278 rooms. These Condotel facilities have three kinds of units: studio unit, which has an average floor area of 40 sq. m.; one bedroom unit reaching around 60 sq. m. The Camp John Hay Manor, which is now on its 6th year of operation is fully occupied during peak seasons like the Christmas holidays, Holy Week and summer.

Estate lots

There are also estate lots where buyers can build their dream homes from among the country log designs or create a new design with Camp John Hay's master architect, Wilfredo + Palmero. There are 49 lots scattered in prime areas in the whole Camp. The smallest is around 600 sq. m while the biggest is around 1,500 sq. m. Prices range from P4 to P5 million based on the special price tag of P9,000 per square meter on each transaction, and as much as P12,000 on some.

Also available are residential homesites in the single-detached Country Homes located in the vicinity of the golf courses and near the golf clubhouse and the Forest Cabins, medium-size duplex units for small to lower middle income families. The Forest Cabins, each with an attic, have a great floor area of 100 sq.m. They are priced between P9 and P10 million.

ConstructScope

Building tech of the future

WHAT DO THE GMA 7 BUILDING, SMRAALL IS ASIA, THE DAP EDSA Inn University's new building, Alter Theatre and the Harbour View Complex have in common? They were all built with MEgen—a revolutionary construction technology that will shield them from the natural elements like plaque or corrosion.

MEgen technology is a groundbreaking approach to architecture in the new millennium. It has the following benefits:

- **Energy saving.** Since the 200 Mall of Asia was built with MEgen, which takes control layer of one of the most revolving materials ever invented, energy within the sound and property utilized.
- **Money saving.** MEgen technology cuts down on cost by as much as 25 percent. Designed for a temperature of 0°C to 50°C, the doors in traditional construction that are bulkier and time-consuming.
- **Soundproof.** MEgen panels have superior acoustic quality that leads to significant noise reduction.
- **Pest-free.** Families building their dream home in Santa Rosa Heights in Cavite can't miss most bad worry about termites or other household pests because polystyrene does not attract any insects or germs.
- **Bullet resistant.** Tests have proven that bullets fired from very high caliber guns cannot penetrate MEgen walls.
- **Quake-tough in installation.** Plumbing, heating, alarm sets and telephone wire assembly requirements are finished in the day-to-day operations of a business. MEgen panels technology enables plumbing, heating, electricity and telephones to be easily installed.
- **Resistant to extreme temperatures and typhoons.** Homes and buildings made with MEgen panels can withstand even the harshest conditions.
- **Wealth and resource standards.** MEgen panels technology has been used for different applications and designs in 28 countries around the world for the past 20 years.

In the Philippines, the exclusive manufacturer, marketer and distributor of MEgen panels is Marvelous Building Technologies Inc. (Tel. Nos. 816-3660 and 816-3670 to 75).

The good life at La Vie Flats

LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST AT LA VIE FLATS, A 20-STOREY RESIDENTIAL condominium that offers the luxury of breathing space in a serene resort-style setting. With units from studio ranging from 45 to 130 square meters, homeowners enjoy more options to design them for big spaces and comforting for their budget. Developed partners, a gym, function rooms and indoor play and study areas for kids enhance the La Vie Flats living experience.

La Vie Flats is part of "The Flats at Parkway," a 5-hectare residential block in Filinvest Corporate City in Alabang. Its enviable location puts you in close development to your backyard amid attending a refreshing ocean is a pleasing aesthetic city. Visit it today. The first building within the 2-meter complex, is scheduled for turnover within the year.

Model units of La Vie Flats will be open for viewing on a soon at Festival Supermall. For investment inquiries, please call 840-0111 or e-mail lavieflats@filinvestcityinfo.com. For online information, visit www.filinfo.com/lavieflats.

Philbex seminar in Cebu City

AS A DEVELOPMENT OF MANDATORY FUNCTIONS MASTER OF THE LEgendary Ming Dynasty, Master Kwan Yung Tat could just click to the Literature of ancient Chinese feng shui auditors and mistake himself for such a person. He is also a master of modern management methodology and as such knows and considers it important to further enhance people's lives.

In this year's Philippine Building and Construction Exposition (Philbex), which is slated from May 25 to 28 at the Ayala Center in Cebu City, Tan hopes to convey his objectives to the interests of the industry and inspire them in the acquisition of technology and advanced knowledge to bring about a more productive business. He will be part of the highlighted 3 he conducts on May 27 along with Arch. Ma. "Johnny" Ysabella, president of Ysabella Design Group and architect Gilbert Ng.

Philbex seminars, conducted by Worldbex Services Inter-nations at the Mrs. 651-8000, 651-8311 to 20 (632) 243-3020 (Cebu), commissioned by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to serve as the professionals of the construction industry. These seminars bring together seasoned and returning pros to share ideas with each other for the development and empowerment of the trade.

PRAYER DEDICATION

The Ayala Group recently held a prayer dedication and tree planting activity for the La Salle Townhomes, which is within its Town & Country Heights subdivision in Antipolo. Among the special guests, from left...are Bro. Dionis Jose Arriola, FSC, Manila Alexadus, director Ayala Group; Bro. Emmanuel Hilario, FSC, architect Cristina Veloria Tandiu, vice chair Ayala Group; and Bro. Jaime Saburnpino, FSC.

A return to beginnings

THE PHRASE FORM MRS LAND CORP. IT'S USED TO LANDMARKS VILLA D'A. Manila, a one-of-a-kind residential property development in Angat. Balanced for those seeking to reconnect with their distinctive roots amid a secure and serene environment. It's just like. Mrs. 911-8000 to 03 local 506, 911-9873 is the real estate management and marketing arm of Cruz & Co.

Villa D'A. Manila is 17.7 km & 6 is a resort-style living for delighted and Bulakeños who highly regard the invaluable experiences of relishing their rich heritage and rediscovering the profound meanings of their faith.

Villa D'A. Manila is besides modestly priced home lots in a well-planned 14-hectare area that is one Angat's best-developed residential districts.

A landscaped entrance leads the welcome eight for residents and visitors in this subdivision with a spacious multipurpose center. A commercial district and one side of its frontage lots have commercial activity.

Village facilities include basketball, tennis, volleyball and badminton courts, a recreational center, a clubhouse, a junior area, tree-lined pathways and an open meditation garden. A perimeter wall encloses the subdivision that has 40- to 12-meter wide concrete roads, sidewalk curbs and gutter.

Villa D'A. Manila is situated on Sapang Palay Road and is accessible from major thoroughfares connecting Bocaue, Sta. Maria, the Angat dam and Norzagaray.

Villa D'A. Manila is now offered at reasonable affordable initial public offering, with residential lots and ready for house construction.

SHOWN (above) during the ceremonial groundbreaking (from left) are Mel Cruz, Joel Luna and Jay Cantos. LEFT photo shows Fr. Nick Bautista, project manager for Sonera Jing Romero, Mel Cruz, Joel Luna, Cristy Cuesta, Dindo Guerrero and Jay Cantos.

Ayala Land breaks ground for Sonera's Village Green

AYALA LAND PREMIER RECENTLY HELD groundbreaking rites for the Village Green—the "heart" of Ayala Southvale's Sonera, Sonera's community that will serve as an idyllic venue where homeowners can gather for various bonding activities.

Sonera is designed to become a "first-time-mom[s]'—a village that fosters warmth and neighborly living. At the Village Green, homeowners will find a shared space where they can freely get together for recreation and leisure.

Symbolic form

The groundbreaking ceremony was presided by a Holy Mass led by Msgr. Nick Bautista from the Archdiocese of Lipa and followed by the blessing of the Village Green's items and items. Among the items that were placed in the time capsule by corresponding officials who graced the event were the pen, pen's Gonda's idea by Jing Romero, project manager for Sonera; the development permit by Mel Cruz, junior division manager for ALP Construction Management Group; and the architectural plan by Joel Luna, assistant vice president for Ayala Land Premier Sonera.

Other items were the landscape plan by Cristy Cuesta, junior division manager, ALP Construction Management Group, Landscaping Unit; the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) by Jay Cantos (department manager, Technical Planning Division, project architect for Sonera), and the city's newspaper by Dindo Guerrero, managing partner of Almanza Guerrero Architects, Sonera's project consultant.

Preview of idyllic life

After the official groundbreaking activities, guests were treated to a exhibition for construction, an "Office Golf" booth (offer hosted by ALP. While the adults sampled the sumptuous barbecue specialties, kids were left to freely run around the future site of the Village Green firing their toy guns and blowing bubbles of their hearts' content.

"This is just a preview of the idyllic life that Sonera will soon be home to," said Joy Cantos (department manager, Technical Planning Division). "The house-free features will ensure that children will have enough space to run around freely without their parents worrying because they practically know everyone inside the village. ALP's name of the game is security and we will also ensure the safety of every resident inside the village."

Central venue

As the central venue of the community's activities, the Village Green will reflect the design architecture of the homes inside Sonera and will therefore have contemporary look and feel, said Joel Luna, AVP for Technical Planning Division.

"We wanted something fresh-looking, which we don't typically see in other subdivisions areas. The facilities we've made to have distinct lines, more upbeat and modern, but still familiar. We particularly chose an architectural vibe opposite to younger tastes, more cosmopolitan, and this is set in the mature and prestige of Alabang to which Sonera is intrinsically linked," Luna explained.

The Village Green complex which occupies almost a hectare will be divided into two structures: the multipurpose pavilion or the clubhouse and the indoor courts, with a swimming pool found in the center linking the two facilities. A Kids' Park will entice children to play all day at the Play Pool, Tadpole and interactive playground, while Elbow extremists can head the Adventure Park for biking, walking, or simply enjoying the landscaped garden areas.

Birthdays, meetings and other functions can be held at the pavilion, while sports buffs can enter the indoor courts. The Village Green will also have a lounge and smaller private function areas where residents can get together for recreational and social events, Cantos added.

The Village Green will basically serve as an "extension" of the homes—a property shared by all the residents, Luna emphasized.

Conveniently located at the center of the village, the Village Green homeowners perfectly satisfies various needs, Luna added.

Ideal residence

Ayala Southvale Village Sonera is envisioned to be the ideal residence for the younger, growing family. Blueprinted to host approximately 2241 lots designed for single-detached houses, the community covers a total area of approximately 23 hectares of green and space.

Due to its excellent location in the Alabang complex, homeowners will enjoy the advantages of living close to prestigious schools, shopping malls, leading restaurants and business districts.

Sonera is another project by Ayala Land Premier—the new name for the top-end developments of Ayala Land providing security, ultimate comfort and privacy. With its superior customer care and property management, ALP [tel. no. 728.7000] ensures exclusivity and value save time.

Construction Show Cebu opens doors to opportunities

By Charles E. Bukot

HOMEBIN and space-saving bed unit manufacturer will be among the event's major exhibitors.

HISPANIC DEVELOPERS AND MANILA business tycoons are among potential for markets in the Visayas and Mindanao region where wealth is steadily growing, where families are keen to buy new homes and where more and more people are pursuing upgrades or training courses here.

This was announced by L. A. Duque and Co., the organizer of the largest and biggest construction expo in southern Philippines, which is scheduled to open next week.

"These trends continue to prevail despite some concerns over our economy," said Lilibeth Hizon-Abesia of La Duque and Co. (corporate_show@hotmail.com), who told the media that the 14th Construction Show Cebu will be open from June 2 to 5 at the Trade Hall of SM City Cebu.

"The event will allow visitors to get a glimpse of the latest construction materials and technology that may provide solutions to get their projects done right and on time. Be a part of the country's largest construction expo in the south and get answers to some of your concerns like what color of paint is best on your ceilings, to what type of roofing to use, and more to other bathroom fixtures will suit best to your home's mood," said Duque.

Generating opportunities

She added that the annual event generates more opportunities for buyers and sellers in the hardware and home construction business.

"This is equally true for the Philippine manufacturers dominating their turfs, new products in the world and for multinational exhibitors entering the fast-expanding markets of the Asian region," she said.

Among the exhibitors in the forthcoming event are the GT Stonewerks which markets natural stone alternatives that ensure a unique feel to any home structure and Sto-Plus which sells uPVC glass panelled doors and windows that reduce noise and pollution while at the same time possess excellent insulation properties translating to less electricity consumption to maintain standby and better heat retention during cold or rainy days.

"We own from exhibitors like Globe International Distributor Inc. which distributes Paulins Maxrite locks that offers a revolutionary 'window anti-theft' coating," added Duque.

Another exhibitor is Hotels Building Productsand which offers acoustic and decorative solution for walls and ceilings designed for applications requiring the highest esthetic standards while maintaining excellent sound absorption capabilities.

Illuminate and purify

"Equally interesting are those products from Eastern Bridges that doesn't only illuminate a room but also purify the air around it," said Duque adding that 3M Lighting Systems will also be presenting its latest energy efficient yet high intensity discharging lighting fixtures.

Duque also mentioned several bathroom package and fixture providers like Villeroy & Boch Pure stone collection that offers chic porcelain-like stone closets and lavatories and easier-to-use Viva Menu design, and Toto's Intensive Lavatory with its multifunction wash basin with automatic sensor faucets.

The 14th Construction Show Cebu is sponsored by APO Precision Quality Board, Philippine Inc., BusinessWorld, Manila Advertising, Sunstar Publications Network and Allwin Builders & Architects Professional Magazine and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

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MADONNA

Filinvest Land to unveil new luxury home collection

MUNTINLUPA, INTERNATIONAL CEBU ensuring that world-class residential development for expatriates and Filipino families of leading property developer Filinvest Land Inc. (FLI), will unveil its new luxury home collection called "The Masterpieces" tomorrow, with two house and lot models that best exemplify "The art of fine living."

At the formal launch of The Masterpieces at Brentville, FLI president, Joseph "Jojo" Sy and top company officials will lead in the unveiling ceremonies at 10 a.m., while entertainment and an activities solar place until 5 p.m.

Children can join the "Enter like Sir Fred" contest while invited visual artists sketch portraits of guests and Brentville residents. Meanwhile, interested buyers attending the event can take advantage of a complimentary trip for four persons to Boracay Island.

'First homes'

Inspired by some of the greatest works of art in recent history, The Masterpieces are upscale single-detached homes aptly named Dibdiban and Monet Lite.

Primarily marketed as "first homes" overlooking the privileged suburban lifestyle, the Masterpieces have taken in areas of 50-6 square metres and are located within the exclusive subcommunities of Provenance 2 and Windsor on Spring at Brentville.

"The Masterpieces are our limited offerings this year for expansion and Filipino families, including our own retirees, looking for tastefully-designed homes that are smaller to scale and therefore priced lower," said FLI's project group head Allan Concepcion, Jr.

Mediterranean architecture

Consistent with the "luxury Southern California ambiance" of Brentville, the Masterpieces are elegantly designed along the lines of Mediterranean architecture, exuding timeless appeal and superior craftsmanship. It also boasts of expansive space planning, construction and finishing works all throughout the usable floor areas of 251 square metres for Madonna and 186 sq. m for Mona Lisa.

Conception said each Masterpiece home "artfully blends a myriad of textures, rich earth tone colors, attractively tiled roofs, quaint front porches and handsomely arched windows," which all complement the natural beauty of its surroundings.

2 home models

The captivating two-level Madonna, the bigger Masterpiece home priced between P8.2 million and P9.7 million, offers families with growing households three bedrooms, including a master's suite with a walk-in closet, an airy family hall, a relaxing balcony and meticulously-designed spaces for a cozy living area, a generous kitchen with convenience area, a maid's room with a separate toilet and bath, a powder room, storage area, a carport, porch and lanai.

On the other hand, the Mona Lisa, a charming, two-story home priced between P5.6 million and P7.4 million, features three bedrooms and well-defined spaces for living and dining areas, a functional kitchen for the home-gourmet, a maid's room and a separate laundry area, a carport, a porch and a lanai. Mona Lisa is perfect for starter families, bachelors, young professionals and returnees.

At Brentvisance 2, expatriate families can enjoy a Mediterranean lifestyle under a Condominium Certificate of Title (CCT), the first of its kind for a horizontal development in the country.

The broad-sized lot packages of the Masterpieces come at home-cash payment rates but are also available through easy in-house or external financing arrangements with zero percent deferred payment of up to two years or half years. Reserved lots only offerings are priced at P9,000 per square metre.

Super

Super! starts the anniversary season

Richard Gutierrez as ...

The man of steel page 02

The man beast page 02

The King of the seas page 02

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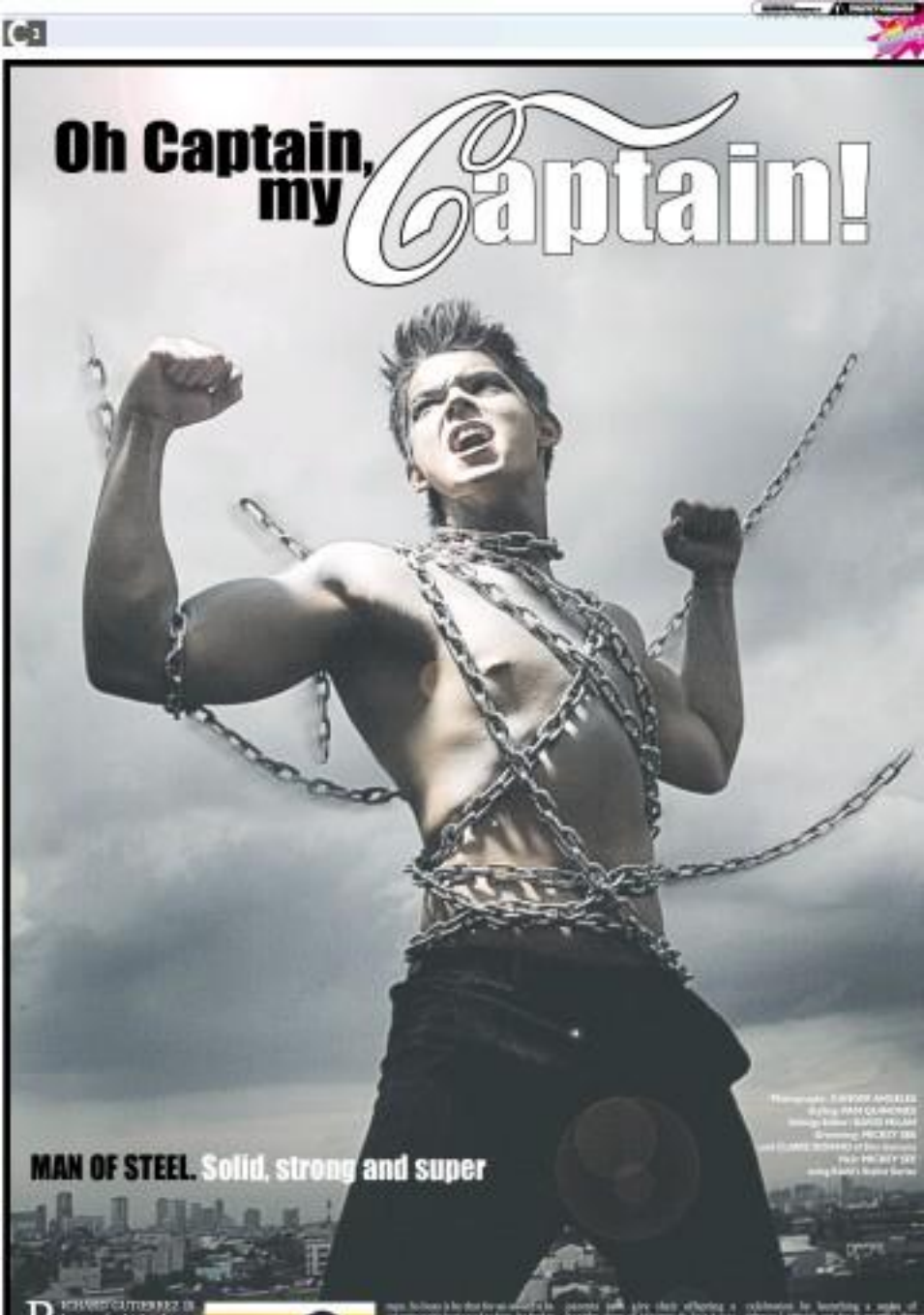
apply for an SM Advantage Card at SM CLARK from May 12 to June 9, 2006 and get FREE CASH COUPONS worth P300

Check the Lifestyle Section every other week for the latest in SM Advantage promos and highlights.

Oh Captain, my Captain!



MAN OF STEEL. Solid, strong and super

RICHARD CATTERMOLE IS hungry for higher learning, in between hopping from one superhero role after another, the Canberra actor was able to escape to the Land Down Under last month to visit a friend who was taking up further studies at the University of Sydney.

It was on to one of the classes and it was like—wow! Exclaimed a wide-eyed Chard as he recalled his latest schooling experience. "In the library when we were young, we considered business class, so we went to four different schools for the entire show!"

It must have been the common thinking that made Richard feel as if now making some time from past, of our pop cultural icons. Who would have thought that a ball boy hall feature crooner would one high up the songs heroes and would be the first in a series of interesting, sparks that Richard would score in his young life? To date, it really shakeout that juxtaposed the humorous crisis where people in the streets are like you going mutual of games, what the heck is that?" Super! Super!"

All these jobs are hilarious. All of the above were acquired that Richard Cattermole has some of us—he has found his direction strong enough to take a chance that is rightfully his. The next generation of book-wise soldiers will grow up and ask those who be there is a superhero—chances are, one name will pop out.

Everybody needs a piece of the young man. So here is his shot for an award to be (of university bestowed to him, he had to ask oldest sister Stella Ardaa to accept the award on his behalf. Or previously has a sigh. We love someone that gives him no time for sleep or rest.

Casting coup

But his latest 25 coming years, his home between's bed to see an animated image and an old photo of his face for the billboard. To top it off, I forgot to the actor lives to call him tattoo.

As the mashup of **Gareth Angelos** was rife with the rose motif, rights or backdrop, are around on the cover of mother strong to get a perfect shot of the "man of steel" (check the Super now from the Pole Quidditch image. And then we found scores. People were writing to see if that's what I thought I first drawn below, and then eliminated somebody our dance lines. "Congratulations!! Captain Richard!" screamed their names with glee.

Editor-in-chief Ida had 5 key reasons to

Photographer: DAVID ANGELES
Styling: MAN CLOTHING
Hair: MICKEY SEE
Grooming: MICKEY SEE
Hair: MICKEY SEE

passions with airy chick offering a healthy dose of Vitamin D, but I was directed to Bilbao. I bet even those super rockin' every guitar cutting like a sore loser.

Alas, even for showbiz visionary has already recognized, this fact, and even Richard Cuenca, the personal Press only lead four-rhapsody to play Captain Richard's actions 5-A-Day new DBDL as you schools promotions this May 29. So, to going to be one ludicrous exciting "Super-Richard versus Richard!"

Super! take two, take three!

We have to Super! Look make it a "review" impression, our nose after another making sure our Super! readers get the best of style, action bring, pop culture, entertainment and nonsense. Last week's Super! batted of right with Richard's close on the movie and with a touch that was it all. "Hey Looking for Amy, so to, Super! It a lot brought to us we commence our close anniversary celebration by launching a series of "Heroes." Heroes out for 6 months that records and memories of the people of our, great, when we know are "I Am Super" Awards and, to back this 'qiU Kiss' experience. And what's more way by working with someone who is on a roll with his third superhero hit!

So this particular close anniversary special, you'll see a power portfolio of Richard evolving into the country's hero to embody those different values of greatness—with the result, an actor who is backing to the hunting line of Richard Gutierrez, actor.

Therefore people, this 2009 and beyond will continually be the year of the Super! On a pop culture, who tantalizes mundanes, we realize that there's a lot to be done in choosing the heads of state and leaders that embody the morally right. Looking at Richard and all you fine, per's out there, we can tell that the future looks bright.

Up, up and away!

Above the scenes ...

A DIFFERENT KIND OF DIRECTOR. Kamille Angeles guides Richard Gutierrez

TWIN SUPPORT. Raymond Gutierrez

SHAPED BUG. Claire Dolmar and Mickey Ilac

By David Hiles

EVERY SUPER SHOOT has been nothing but exciting—especially because we work with great teams and great subjects. We always make sure the readers get to see the ingenuity of the best talents this country has to offer.

When you normally see a only the finished product—a vertical 8-sheet cupcake by skilled photographers, new models around by stylists and artists. A lot of work goes into each shoot—from organizing the logistics to the actual shoot itself...but it's work that we enjoy doing.

So our first special cloud assignment, we decided to give a whole new meaning to the term "cover" shoot. Oh yes, it's our 1st digital but we'd rather give our readers a gift.

The night before the shoot, everyone was excited, nervous and even insomniac! Kidding. But yeah, we were all excited and nervous. Everyone wanted to make sure they'd give the shoot their all, and they did just that. The relief hidden inside every stylist Jhen Quiñones was noticeable as she framed the screaming hairpins to make sure everything went as planned. The major, louder stylist captured every perfect moment there was, many a lot almost the sky, under the bridges and in between. The film festival also reminded Jhen Quiñones and Claire Dolmar used their super powers to create visually stimulating looks that effects that will forever joins Claire for carrying her own hair for the main shoot (pics). Richard, the superstar that he is, was a great team player, as usual. He didn't leave any question at all—not even when we asked him to do all kinds of crazy things...from wearing girly girl wigs to having an orangutan run with wire and piles of metal chains. Now that's devotion!

We hope you enjoy this shoot—as much as we enjoyed working ours.

JUST SMILE WHEN YOU'RE AFRAID. Stylist Pam Quiñones and I

Dirty Dancing

Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

IF YOU'VE BEEN DYING TO fly halfway around the world to experience the heavy shaking rituals and syncopated salsa rhythms of a Caribbean ancestral first rumba as the thought of shelling out $1,000+ for a measly ticket to sun-tipped Puerto Rico), you're in for a surprise-ier weekend.

Forget "learning with the stars," The Dreamers of Subic Bay—himself, Mrs. Marcos (www.dreamers.com), brings his infectious Latin-infused funk to the PICC Reception Hall. [CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City] on Saturday, June 3.

Together with Our 16-piece band from Orlando, Florida, the Grammy-nominated salsero cooks up a steady serving of sexy salsa, beats, topped with a contemporary spin. [Ang el R&B, reggaeton, and rap. Call 891-9999 or visit www.subic-world.com.ph.

Measure in Love @ Sagada, 7 p.m. tonight

Photos from 6/2004, and movie story from the rare and far-seen scene, a semi-summary for assigned Ogaoa bands was born. "Tay called it Sagada Tonight. We chatted, and a favorite haven was born and the band is "alive!" the crowd will be Sound, Up Close has Drums, Nine Mass, Christmas Lights, Daydream Cycle, Sagadahack, Wakapa, Sino Nga?, Surviving Cave Climber, Kompressor, Shelby and the Insects, and Storms. Don't forget to grab a few pics by Vance by Snow, Bel Haven and stickers and limited edition Sagada T. To before you leave it. Call 861-9929 or visit www.sagada.com.

Repose Art & Music Festival, May 27 & 28

Call it neighborhood-ist-ic. This weekend, the easy-rose-flood-electric whitewave space three-in-the-arc Makati chases down for "Volunteer of Manhattan Sa Filipinas," showtime-sized festival featuring pure arts and crafts bazaar, sound-and-lights-on-screen, sculpture installations, food fairs, and free screenings at Ayala Triangle. During the evenings, you can dine at fusion eatery/bistro to the music of Blue Ring Ensemble, Chelina Clements, Cake Exclusive, and other local artists. Call 754-9202 or 893-4418.

Other Super 24/7 events

May 27, Saturday

[Name illegible] Master of the World Trade Center, Mandaluyong. The Magic of Udi Marcos Mash-Boom-em Mystical Side Romance Festivals at Rockville Theater.

Project Mayhem at Centropolis, Reggae Mellow at 7th Rocks, Johnny Angel Mindy at Shangri-La Omnibuzzer, Disorienting Saturdays at SP Reyes & Stephen Ko at Mercy, Insanity Dopamine Effect, Ultra Purge at Embassy Club, Campus Invasion Night at Mag Bar Cafe, Party Saturdays at 201's, Mixapoy at Subculture Bistro, DJ Bobby Jeff at Tambayan Sports Bar, Jam Session with Nerry Corpuz, Bom and Vallo at Governor's, DJs Sweetheart & Marty at Prince of Japan, Hotshots & the Gang at Rick's, Heaven Sake Bars at Red.

May 28, Sunday

MYST Mixapoy, & Sun Utility at Bagaberde, Social Bloc, Philippine Summer Samurai Bliss, Upsets Without Borders Photo Op, Noir at Arkanoi Fantasia and Snowbell.

May 29, Monday

Miami-more-A-Beautiful Day at 70s Retro, Anything Night w/ Mikko Reyes (Retro Garage Remake of Conspiracy), Salsa Night w/ Salsa 69 Dancers at Dance Floor, Ladies Night w/ DJ Bobby Cruz, Dawn & Jessie at Bobby Lechner Jazz Trio at Cuppers Bar, Tuesday Mashup Club Mixes

May 30, Tuesday

Pondaya at Expat at Connections, Power on Dos Alessandra Tom-A-Do Cantaloupe at Zac, Kindness Tuesdays at Manila DJ Club, Pro Boom-Tonic at Chili, Bacchus at Cafe Havana Emerald, Acoustic Night at Temple, Amps Sanders at 70s Retro, Spirit of 43 at Captain's Bar.

May 31, Wednesday

Weekend Wednesdays w/ DJ Royal Alexander at Simplicity, The Bloom Fields at Bulletin-o-Hotel to Alabang, Discotech w/ DJ Pop Garden at Blacks, DJs Rad Ty & Can Boom-ya at Embassy Cubicle, Funkenopla at Beats 97.5 Club, DJs Mono Mingo-Ass & Jobsperience at Embassy Club, Party Monkey's Mania Factory w/ Jolly Cruz at Cheddar Makati, Thursday Happiness at Prince of Japan, DJ Dashcat Dimple, DJ Bok at Governors', Jazz Night at Mag Bar Cafe Restaurant, Jolly Dances at Mark's Nooh Dasangan at Dimsaloy, Asia at 70s Retro.

June 1, Thursday

Pondaya at Expat & The Bloom-fields at Club, Four Aces at Manila Hotel, Whole at 70s Retro, Reggae Night at Alabang-town, BBC's Sweet Suite Soul at Dj Mike Concuelos at Dake Lab, Dollhouse Prince of Cambodia, CDM Liquor Spiritual Dines, SPE at Magnet Cafe & Lounge at Recto, Latino Thursday at Prince of Japan, Room Whatever Thursdays at Manila DJ Club, Socialista DJ Theodaca at Bed, DJ Badboy Jeff at Temple.

June 2, Friday

Sundance at Abandonment, Bill at Pondaya-ma and Fairmont Terrace, Allegoria Opera at CCP, French Cuisine Week at Tivoli, Decadence at Royal Mansion at 201's, DJ Bomb Shanpoo at Blacks, Fashion Fridays at Cuba Red Dj & DJ Royce at Drive, DJ Beats Soup at Embassy Club, Roundtable at Mezz, Myst Kid at Mr Dish, DJ Mike & Gerald at Embassy Dubbins, DJ Mixed Dimensions, Jazz Nights at Manila The Jonks at 70s Retro, Gospel Praise at Bed, Route 10 at Mark's, Dos Bros & Sherry at Prince of Japan, Mind Kisses at Capitol's Bar.

Schedules may change at the last minute. For more information on what's happening today at events, visit 24/7 through your mobile phone and send to 2366 (2Date text/2Tell 2Time). Log on to mag24-7.com or send us your free copy of 24/7 Weekend Navigator at bets.pn@inquirer.com.ph or by fax at 896-2000. Before Wednesday's issue, e-mail mag24_7@yahoo.com.

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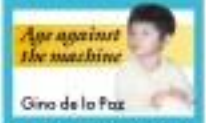
Third year high

Here's to growing up, thinking out loud, and, like, finally rocking the universe! Happy birthday to all of us, the Super generation



Gina de la Paz

TO WRITE ON A WEEKLY basis is not as easy as it looks, especially for an ever-evolving young writer like me.

But three years on—here's mud to 200 weekends of fully booked downtown and near-dead beat lulus—we're still at it, hoping not to "hyperventilate unexpectedly before" or give you a lovesty bear hug or a friendly super-no. (Commentary on the to-do list for next time. What? Who's being rude?

Spoilt little Gen Z customers aside, running "a little school paper" such as ours is hopefully also the exception from monthly mandates. Take time between issues to do a huge learning experience, like analyze "Idol" numbers for the price of one. To prepare this anniversary issue (using into an honest egg of self-congratulation though, I'd like to confess my homage to that second journey and, like it or not, gave us those somewhat wizened, coming-of-age anecdotes to you all.

On information and inspiration

Like I said, regularly churning out research material—yielding genuinely golden nuggets along the way—is tough. After, you have to wade through one bit of info to get into the meaty stuff for the long read. Now, I'm the one for brief: see 5 lines or other facts from three days, weeks even, when I was overwhelmed by all the stuff I could possibly write about that I went through a mental tiger mantra. Brain? Shaka. Zip. Wow. Wow!

See, it's now easy to unlock the labyrinth of your unconscious, get all the freaky-freaky subconscious stuff out, and "unveil your calmness," to quote "Desperate Housewives" director Richard Shilly. It's such a thing to tell and think of that at some age until an event that makes it more—literally (ugh), stylish, and with a distinct point of view. Once you get over that hump, however, you'll find that writing can become one of your greatest life's greatest pleasures.

After almost three years, I still can't say that I'm a writer who is content in exhibiting calmness. Far from it. But at least, with the frequent discipline I get from producing on a keyboard (like a sorcerer with a helicopter view on youth culture), I now know the difference between

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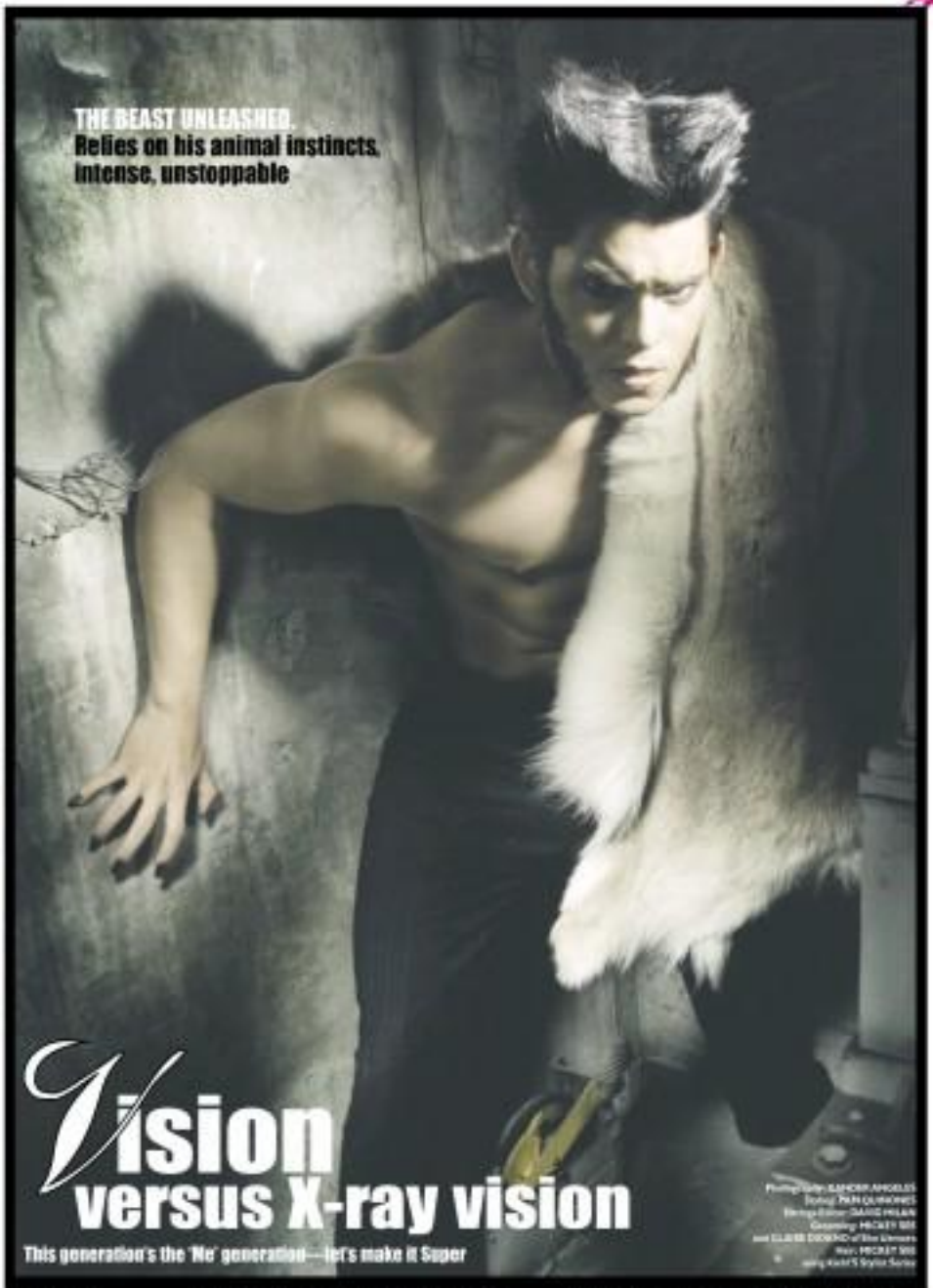

Vision versus X-ray vision

This generation's the 'Me' generation—let's make it Super

Photographer: SANDRA ANGELES
Styling: PAN QUIMONES
Hair & Makeup: DAVID MILAN
Grooming: HICKEY SIO
and CLAUDE DIOKNO of Bee Kleaners
Hair: HICKEY SIO
using Kent's Stylist Series

By Pepe Diokno

WANT X-RAY VISION? Man, that'd be cool—if you fail college, you can always get a job at the airport. I will end the crappy intro right there.

But yeah, a lot of us have X-ray vision at the top of our superpowers list. It's cool being able to see through clothing, or look at the insides of people and tell what's wrong with them. It's fun and easy.

But let me tell you a secret. We all have X-ray vision, and we use it everyday. We look at each other and scrutinize every little thing we see. I bet you love staring at/at people through your X-ray eyes. We enjoy seeing people in their most vulnerable states.

But I'll tell you another secret—just between us super heroes—X-ray vision is not a super power. I'll tell you what is.

This generation

This session is three years old now, all those years we've called ourselves, and our generation, Super.

Why pompous, no?

One thing that's been said of our generation is that we're too full of ourselves—yeah, we have gotta enough to say we're the best people ever.

A big list of us have online profiles to proclaim our being, and blogs to let people know what we think. Some of us have our own comics, and even personal shows.

We do everything in pursuit of our own personal happiness. We party and drink, and do corny things just to get our fill.

We're the "Me" generation!

Here's the third secret. Our super power is "Me."

It is a different generation

The older people are freaked out. They think we're careless, that we have no goals, and all that drama. They hope we'll outgrow this phase.

The harsh answer is that we will outgrow it, but we won't turn into them, we're different.

While all generations go through the "finding themselves" phase in their teens, the difference between this generation and the past is where they look for themselves.

Older generations have looked outward, with X-ray eyes. They've valued themselves in opinions, and normal and acceptable truths. They've complained society and changed it, but they've made it more complex.

Our generation's looking for our truth now. We're not looking for it anywhere else. Like, in ourselves.

What result is this? Is it the meaning of life, or whether Jesus ever married? I have to remind Like Confucius, but I think that the truth is the self. That isn't complex.

See, the more we get lost, the more we screw up, the more we fall, the more times we get up, and the more truth we find—we find bits of ourselves.

The more we care about one self, the more we acknowledge our own potential to do—the more we contribute to the world. When we build shelter to our children, we build shelter to the world.

We need to know who are we to know how we can change the world around us.

It's the Super generation

I said that X-ray vision isn't a super power, our generation's revenge of "Me" is. But what really makes us Super?

Our idea are still tied ourselves, just like the older generations have. We'll laugh at the things we've done/ can. But let's hope we don't resign to the notion we know aren't right. Let's not lose ourselves like many adults have.

To do that, we need to turn "our" into "us." The "Me" generation needs to grow unless it's able to find itself, and share it with others.

And don't be distracted by adults who say you're too young, that you're inept, that you can't do. You know you can. We know you can.

You don't have to be pretty. You don't have to be this award-winning, decorated, prodigy. Even god knows where. You don't have to be in media, people don't even have to know you.

For three years, Super has featured young people just like you, who are true to their powers, and do what they love. There are many of them. We're hoping you'll become of them to the near future.

Remember, there's just one target. Look inside yourself, stay true to your insides. It's those that resonated deep with others.

That's our vision—it isn't X-ray—but it's Super.

Third year high

SUPER! SELECTION

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BIG, BLACK AND WHITE. Jojo Bolivar and Aaliyah Pedro

Stars in stripes

FROM SUPERSTARS TO SUPER-SERVERS! Famous celebrities took on a different role when they acted as dub-chefs, bartenders and waiter people yesterday at TGI Friday's Glorietta branch recently. During that special day, there were no scripts, no takeovers and no talent fees... it was all about the spirit of volunteerism and the desire to help cancer survivor children.

"Stars in Stripes" was a fundraising event that gave celebrities the chance to use their popularity to make an impact on society. With the stars they spent at TGI Friday's, they were able to help our cancer-stricken kids under the care of UP-PGH's Medical Social Services-Onco Support Group.

TGI Friday's enthusiastic brought visitors which included a raffle draw and a sit down dinner of Friday's Grand salad, Fried Mozzarella, Roasted Chicken, Oreo Mud Cake and free flowing iced tea.

With the assistance of Friday's wait staff, acoustic artist Alan Sugueco (who, together with singer Lou Magbiegal, was awarded "Best in performing"), model-singer Aliyah Flores ("Best in Service Unit"), actresses Jean Victoria, Alex Manpere and Jessica Soho and theatre actress Nyna Green (who all took home the "Wow Service" title) provided special Friday's service that night. Also present were sportscaster George Roeba ("Best Restart") and model-actor Derek Ramsay ("Customer Acquaintal Service" award). Vanni Jed Mortal was "Mr Congeniality"; he hopefuls with singer Jimmy Bondoc) was also "Best in Food Safety & Sanitation." Wannap Waiprap (of

DEREK Ramsay

HAPPY TOGETHER. Guess which is the artista?

AIZA Seguerra

jocks Aga and Wallace, actresses Kilma Bautista, Kathleen Hermosa and host Jiangsha Wilder also joined in to help GMA TV heartthrob Mark Chan Ignacio, Abbot Santos, Ryan Cruz, Mike Tan, CJ Muere and Megan Young did a guest job! Also present to support the cause were world-class songwriter Ricky Lee, ace director Dominic Zapanta, and stage performers Chanda Romero and Mars Ravelo III. Drop Science band and another ex-member Paolo Santos provided the live entertainment.

Proceeds of the event will go directly to the children beneficiaries of the UP-PGH's Medical Social Services-Onco Support Group.

The Tell-tale Heart: Tips for a Healthy Life

Dr. Luisito O. Lilio, Head of the Nutrition Support Services of St. Luke's Medical Center is an expert in clinical nutrition with a proven track record in the care of the critically-ill like cardiac patients. He would rather help in the prevention of heart disease than see it in its full-blown manifestation. As part of St. Luke's total quality patient care program, Dr. Lilio looks at the over-all health status of a patient and recommends simpler and healthier lifestyle change. Here is his prescription for a healthy heart:

Eat right. Making healthy food choices significantly lowers blood pressure and reduces the risk of a heart attack. Loading up on fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and fish keeps the kilos off but your body also needs the right amounts of healthy fat. With high-cholesterol, bad food and often convenience items taking up a larger role in the modern diet, you will be better off with balanced nutrition that matches your calorie and protein requirement based on your weight and nutritional assessment.

For obtaining optimum health and maximum productivity, Dr. Lilio recommends a balanced diet supplemented with "nutrient-complete" products like Ensure. It provides complete and balanced nutrition and can also be used as a meal replacement to help ward off hypertension, stroke and cardiovascular disease. It gives you the required calories and helps eliminate the "guessing game" associated with fad diets.

Be active. Sedentary lifestyles are the scourge of the modern age. If work and other concerns leave you with no time to exercise, remember that just being physically active doing housework or taking care of the kids already accounts for exercise. So keep moving and do whatever form of exercise is fit for you. Exercise provides health benefits for the whole body like improving circulation and muscle mass function, repairing body tissues and reducing inflammation, aside from promoting heart protection.

Avoid stress. Studies have shown that emotional and physical stress can also increase oxidative damage from free radicals to the whole body. It also raises your blood pressure and makes you more prone to heart attacks. So make sure you set aside some time for rest and relaxation. Step back from the "fast lane" and engage in relaxing activities like music, reading, enjoying time with your family, or having special hobbies. Your heart will thank you for it.

Have a positive outlook. Studies have shown that people who look at the brighter side of life tend to have better productivity and stable relationships. Married couples with positive relationships tend to live longer.

For an effective patient management approach to intensive and comprehensive pre- and post-operative cardiac rehabilitation, more doctors incorporate daily feedings of Ensure.

Ensure is equipped with a heart-defense system rich in antioxidants and low in cholesterol, sodium and saturated fats to assure you of total heart protection. It also has a heart-healthy fat blend that meets the standards set by the American Heart Association.

Dr. Lilio was a guest speaker at the Annual Convention of the Philippine Heart Association held on May 26, 2006 at the EDSA Shangri-la Hotel. He delivered a talk with the topic "Cardio-nutrition: Its Impact on the Total Care of a Patient."

Heart protection
ENSURED

Recommended by 8 out of 10 doctors and meets standards of the American Heart Association and National Cholesterol Education Program

Your heart is the center of activity in your body. Every part of your system depends on it. If your heart is healthy your entire body benefits. But if it's not, then your whole body suffers. Your heart is in charge of pumping life-giving blood to your entire body, providing nourishment and oxygen to all the cells in your bones, organs, muscles and tissues. The blood comes from the heart into your arteries, then into tiny tubes called capillaries and finally into the veins that lead back to your heart.

Although your heart is a powerful organ, it can be damaged by disease and poor living habits like smoking, an unhealthy diet, lack of exercise and stress. All these may weaken your body and hinder your blood circulation.

Ensure helps fight off the harmful effects of free radicals caused by these unhealthy habits. Its unique Heart Defense System creates a shield around your heart to help protect you from an attack.

Combined with proper diet and regular exercise, a heart smart eating practice will help the your heart pump life-giving blood and nutrients to the rest of your body.

Ensure's other heart healthy benefits include:

Low cholesterol – Helps lower your blood cholesterol, trap those plaque and cholesterol build up before they line up blood

Low sodium – Helps control high blood pressure, relieves swelling or edema, and reduces fluid build up

Low saturated fats – Helps lower the fatty blocking effects or the cholesterol and triglycerides of the fats you consume or your arteries

Ensure your heart. Ensure your life.

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Super

pop culture . entertainment . recreation

Adjustments only serve to remind me how flexible one can become

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I get by with a little help from my friends

By Karina A. Malgaro

FEELING DISPLACED AND disoriented is not an uncommon state when one is in a new place, and experiencing culture shock or jam all over shock from his or her surroundings.

Those two rather alarming feelings were what hit me within the first 48 hours I had arrived, in Mactan, Cebu. Some may think, Cebu? Friends laughed at my initial whimpers by comparing my past moves to other countries but they just didn't understand where I was coming from. As we age, we hate change, we favor comfort zones, or behavioral patterns that give us a sense of place wherever we go. If you think only children have security blankets you're wrong, adults have them too, they're just not as tangible from many times. I had, over the last two years built up a relocate for myself that zoned between work, socializing, traveling, romantic escapes and hedonism. All of a sudden, I was away from home, for not "saved" from home, and short of sounding like a fetal, I was at a loss of what to do next. Even with a new job as producer for Balitang IV, and an upcoming Model School Gala to look forward to (which was handled rather successfully by new friends and colleagues Rebecca Pike and Jessel Mauvais) I was still feeling like I had made a rather drastic change in my life.

So what's a newbie to do? Newbie's gotta get busy. Work will soon get up to speed but in the meantime the hyperdrive in me must be satisfied ... so I took a quiet moment, and "asked" the powers that be to keep me occupied and do away with my comfort zone. Well (the powers that be, ironically enough, were on hyperdrive and answered me within 48 hours. The first weekend I was invited to a press con headed by the very charismatic and personable Julie Alegrado-Bergen (a dear old friend who I had not almost eternal(ly)ously in Cebu since those 3 years ago). Julie had long ago dreamed of putting up a foundation that would be beneficial to all her countrymen. Her foundation, Tacloban Bound, aims to touch and train anyone to promote tourism in their locale, whether it be through souvenir items, bed and breakfast accommodations or heritage tour. In other words, no matter where you come from, there is a beauty there that must be shared to others and through tourism, great or small, a chance exists for the Philippines to improve its economy and its dwellers to be more respectful and aware of the treasure they are quite literally standing on. Aside from being hosted at her already popular family-owned and run resort Bluebay Blue Waters, we were then whisked off to familiar Olac Water Island Resort, located about 2 ½ hours away by car to Oslob, Cebu. Over-he-way we stopped by an assorted house, a local cell favorite and a church, analyzing this situation that had me relaxing and reconnecting with old friends, it was almost as if I ARE 84

BUTCH Carungay, Jana Alegrado, Iris Arcenas, Margie Lindhor and Jude Bacalso

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HEALTH EXPRESS

AQUAMAN. King of the seas, draws his strength from nature, as powerful as water

We've got the power

From an army of me to an army of we. There is definitely strength in numbers.

By Gino de la Paz and Pam Pastor

LAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATED Super's second anniversary by giving Pinoy Superiority a push. We wanted people to reach deep within themselves and realize that labels shouldn't stop them, that they should take risks, cross boundaries and sometimes even hurdles to make a mark on the world.

And it seems that Pinoys were listening. Really listening.

Like Leo Oracion. Sure Gaston may frown (many, who proudly waved the colors of the Philippine flag 29,333 times above his head.

Like Manny Pacquiao who dodged bullets and threw punches to earn yet another boxing title for the motherland. (With all the cash he's sure to hit, we think he should be called Money Pacquiao. Excuse the digression, we couldn't resist.)

Like the cast and crew of "Ang Pag-ibang Ito" at Manoeuvre Showroom, who nightly captivated audiences in Manila but tugged at people's hearts from Singapore to Surabaya.

Like Ian Gamarcus and Neil Dela Llana who made Pinoys proud at this year's Independence Spirit Awards in Los Angeles.

Like Jolens, who wrote the Philippine flag on his jacket when he performed as a guest contestant on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno." If you don't have a clue who he is yet, Google him, click his website and prepare to belly-laugh.

Like Emerson Herrera, who proved time and time again that you're never too old to chase your dreams. Who could've known that a 50-year-old would be a hit on the dance floor? We'd like to think she won because viewers found her endearing, a breath of fresh air in the hallowed art of presenting their image with scripted antics.

Not sure there are a lot more OAs (ordinary achievers) out there who achieved great things for themselves and for the country.

Because we're already proven that we're powerful as individuals. It's time to merge our talents and share our strengths as a generation.

If last year we dreamed we did "we," on our third anniversary, we want the spotlight on the "we."

Because no matter what critics and cynics may say, we've got the power.

SUMMER collection of Mario Calmanares, Sal Malto and Joe Duarte

METRO Magazine's James Ong, Shangri-La Mactan's communications Sharon Seimetz, Sunstar's Jade Rosales, The Freeman's Hector Abuso and Ace Alvarez

ATCI and Digi Alvarez, Lali Arroyo, jR Isaac and Lifestyle Network's managing director Chinky de Jesus

I get by with a little help from my friends

MEGA's Lorraine Balmores, JR Isaac and Lifestyle Asia's Suet Yap

LIFESTYLE Network's White Hot Summer host Angel Jacob

Francoise D.

the weekend was trying to wean me away from my old life through several routine manifestations.

But what now? It was the second week, approaching the second weekend (and a Mactan Holiday) and although work had picked up the pace a little bit, I still dreaded the long hours of waiting, before the gangs let through. Jane intervened again. Another friend, (a blonde, always seemingly pre-promised on hyperdrive one) called me and asked me to take his place as a series of events being thrown at the Shangri-La Mactan by the Lifestyle Network. White Hot Summer was the theme, and it was going to be chockful of activities from a fashion show, a cooking show, a furniture exhibit, a beach party, and the clincher: spa treatments at the newly opened Chi Spa. I looked back at my comfort zone (but, everything was now with a check mark. Who could refuse? Needless to say the Lifestyle Network knew how to shake the homesickness blues. The parties were well attended bringing in the fashion and society luminaries in Cebu. While the cooking show had me with a bomb carbonell (and I never outgrapbled by guest chef Glenda Barretto, I also met more old friends from Manila who then introduced me to new friends based in Cebu. It was probably this last "intervention" from the powers that be, or the friends that let that finally jumpstarted by acceptance of my surroundings and my situation. It was almost like a three-day farewell party to a life I had gotten accustomed to and a solid welcome to a "new" stage of life.

It's been three weeks and there have been changes, but none have been unwelcome. There are adjustments but they only serve to make me realize how adaptable and flexible one can become given the chance to stretch out into new territories. And thank goodness, for interventions.

BENHIE and Tisoki Aleviz

Is your room filled with sound or stereo equipment? Do you want to change the way you experience digital music? Are you distracted by all these questions? Then spoil those eardrums with the iPod HiFi. Like, now!

Brand new Speakers of the house

By Gino de la Paz

IT'S A WEE BIT HIGHER THAN a standard toaster, but it sure packs a wallop. I wish someone told me to step back before switching on the iPod HiFi because now, I think I'm partially deaf. Partially deaf but completely awed.

As I hoped, well, the hard way this baby packs enough power to blow your hair back, as if you were listening to a whole wall of speakers. (Well, it didn't help that the first song that blasted out of my iPod was Jason Nevins' remix of N.O.R.D.'s "Rush Hur." But still.) The iPod Hi-Fi is really a giant level up from the rinky-dinking iHome tanning mini speakers I'm used to.

After filling my room with the sweet sound of iPod music, I decided to introduce my new speakers to the other parts of the house. You know, to see if all the media hyperbole was justified. First stop was, ahem, the bathroom (where they say the acoustics are fantastic. Perfect? Fantastic? Yeah, I tripped out on slightly weird, artsy, hotsteric sounds from weird, artsy, hotsteric group Sigur Rós ("Sunpeople"). The iHiFi's double-walled plastic shell prevented the speakers from vibrating too much, pouring out a distinctly clutter-free sound. (By the way, if you haven't heard Sigur Rós yet, it's what Siamese sounds like at rock ball hour.)

Since it had hand grips, I was able to lug it around much like a wonder of beer. I parked it in the garden next, to see how my future pool parties would sound. (In a room of beer, I marked up some old-school club tunes like Shakatak's "Bo Bo Bubble." The natural bass of the iPod HiFi muscles out of a 13-inch woofer and low frequencies—think Kenny Bernard's trademark heavy beats—are boosted even more. (To geek, it's because of the "dual voice coil, ported bass reflex design for best system.") When/if I ever add screaming college kids and it's a party! We'll!!!

Anyway.

The four-foot design is also pure Apple. White and just right, the iPod HiFi's look complements anything you put near it, whether it's an Art Deco console in your living room or a Gilroy-inspired sandcastle at the beach. (Hey, you can make it into beach blanket bombing! Leave it alone—take it! It's evil! Just notice.) No high power bricks here; all the components are tucked internally. Whether you own the classier models (like the first generation doorstop, or, iPod or the MGB Hybrid—or the humbler ones (like the Mini and Nano), the iPod HiFi also comes with a full range of universal dock adapters.

And as a bonus for all you lazyasses out there, the iPod HiFi has its own remote control. (Only slightly bigger than a lighter, it has the same straightforward appearance and philosophy as a shuffle. I kinda wish, though, that it had a clickwheel. My right thumb kept on stroking the buttons instead of pushing down as I'm supposed to do. (And while I'm on the subject, what does the menu button do? Hmmmm.)

IMO, the iPod HiFi is the best-sounding new generation sound system in the market today. Rock or dance, soft or loud, Podcasts or otherwise, our guests are guaranteed!

Log onto www.asia.apple.com for a list of authorized reseller locations.

DROP THAT BEAT ONE MORE TIME. Plug your iPod into the built-in universal dock and enjoy

PANGARAP NILA, SINAGOT NA NG FONTERRA!

Congratulations to the 1st & 2nd Draw Winners

PANGARAP MO, SAGOT KO!

April 17, 2006 Draw

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Lorna B. Cruz, Camarines Sur

GMA
Flordeliza C. Paz, Marikina City
Alexie O. Castillo, Caloocan City

VISAYAS
Ma. Lerma C. Benito, Negros Occidental
Louie Gee L. Gilgano, Cebu

MINDANAO
Efilda M. Galamiton, Misamis Oriental
Nurhida Alnon, Zamboanga City

May 15, 2006 Draw

₱1 MILLION
Grand Prize Winner
SYLVIA B. BACOLCOL
Davao City

₱ 250,000 Regional Winners

LUZON
Marcel Habana, Catanduanes
Ma. Jocelyn Ortega, Pangasinan

GMA
Moly M. Silverio, Manila
Joanna Cruz, Pasay City

VISAYAS
Wilfredo C. Encargues, Iloilo
Evelyn Anosa, Northern Samar

MINDANAO
Floriano T. Barcos, Misamis Oriental
Renico Lorejo, Cagayan de Oro

Puwede ka pang manalo sa Final Draw. Until May 31 na lang!